

**THE DEAD CITY;
A TRAGEDY**

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The Dead City; A Tragedy by Gabriele D'Annunzio

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A Tragedy
by Gabriele d'Annunzio

*Eros, unconquered in strife * * **
— Sophocles,

Rendered into English by Prof. G.
Mantellini. Illustrations from the
stage production of Eleonora Duse
made expressly for this work.

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SKETCH OF LA DUSE

When "La Duse," in 1893, made her first tour through the United States under the management of Carl and Theodor Rosenfeld, playing "Camille," "The Wife of Claudius," "Cavalleria Rusticana," "Fedora," "Divorçons," "La Locandiera," and other plays, she was simply the greatest tragedienne of Italy, where all people knew her name and fame; and where no one thought of comparing another artiste to her. Since then ten years have passed and her fame and glory have spread all over the world.

Those who know Eleonora Duse mention her age and beauty. She is now thirty-eight years old, but who can say whether she is beautiful or not? On the stage she is beautiful, but she is homely too; she is tall and she is small; she is young and old; awkward and delicate; apathetic and nervous. She is whatever her part demands. What no artiste before her possessed is hers. She has an incomparable power over her nerves and muscles. In sinking her personality in the poet's conception she fascinates, almost hypnotizes us. But it is hard, almost impossible, to suggest an idea of this

wonderful woman, who seems to have effaced the boundary that separates nature from art.

Who is Eleonora Duse?

She was born at Vigevano, a small town in Lombardy. Her talent is hereditary, her father and grandfather having been actors of no mean ability. The grandfather, Luigi Duse, was thoroughly legitimate in his work. He recited in Venetian dialect, a new departure in those days. The Duses established the Garibaldi Theater at Padua.

The life of Eleonora Duse, the granddaughter, has been one of bitter struggles against poverty and unfavorable environment. But the practice of the stage was her first school, her initiation into artist life was her education; she is an actress from infancy. Perhaps never in the days of her childhood did Eleonora Duse say, "I want to be an actress." Perhaps no symptom of that irresistible desire which is the usual beginning of every triumphant career, foretold to her the glory that to-day sweetens the memory of her sorrowful youth.

She was scarcely twelve years old when she was working almost day and night upon the stage in obscure theaters, those grotesque and sad asylums of inferior companies. Her wages represented the

most important item in the income of her not well to-do family. Those were days of toil and suffering, when, weak from lack of sufficient food, she had to undergo the exhausting fatigues of the stage, and her chief reward was the applause of an audience richer in emotions than in gold or silver. Nor was she compensated by being fêted as an infant wonder. Indeed, she was almost compelled to conceal her youth from both manager and public, lest it might produce a doubt in their minds whether the repertoire of dramas and tragedies were entirely suited to her tender years. The pressing need of money weighed not only on her genius but on her mind and spirits which, notwithstanding the suffering of a life of toil, were naturally gay, due to the open-air exercise and the mirth and mischief of a noisy company. Still she developed force and spirit. She combined the manner of the adult woman with that of the thoughtful child. Almost unknown to herself she became absorbed in her part, and the woman inoculated the child with strong emotions, which deprived her gestures, her face and her voice of all childishness, thrilled her audiences and caused her companions to wonder. The germ of a great actress was growing in the little wandering comedienne.