



MR. HAROLD MACGRATH.

ette *Daily Courier*, a position which he has held ever since.

It is just such books as Mr. Harold MacGrath's *Arms and the Woman*, which after running serially appeared in book form about a year

and a half ago, that force upon one the conclusion that there is no standard by which the popularity of a book can be positively prophesied. *Arms and the Woman* can best be summed up as "a rattling story." It had fire and dash and humour. It was constructed with a great deal of skill and dexterity. As a serial it was very widely read; and yet since it has been in book form its success has been only mediocre. So far as one can see there was absolutely no reason why *Arms and the Woman* did not go into many successive editions. It was an infinitely better story in every way than many of the books which during the past eighteen months have had such astonishingly large sales. However, from our opinion of *Arms and the Woman* we believe that there is the possibility of such a success in Mr. MacGrath's next book, which is to be entitled *The Puppet Crown*,

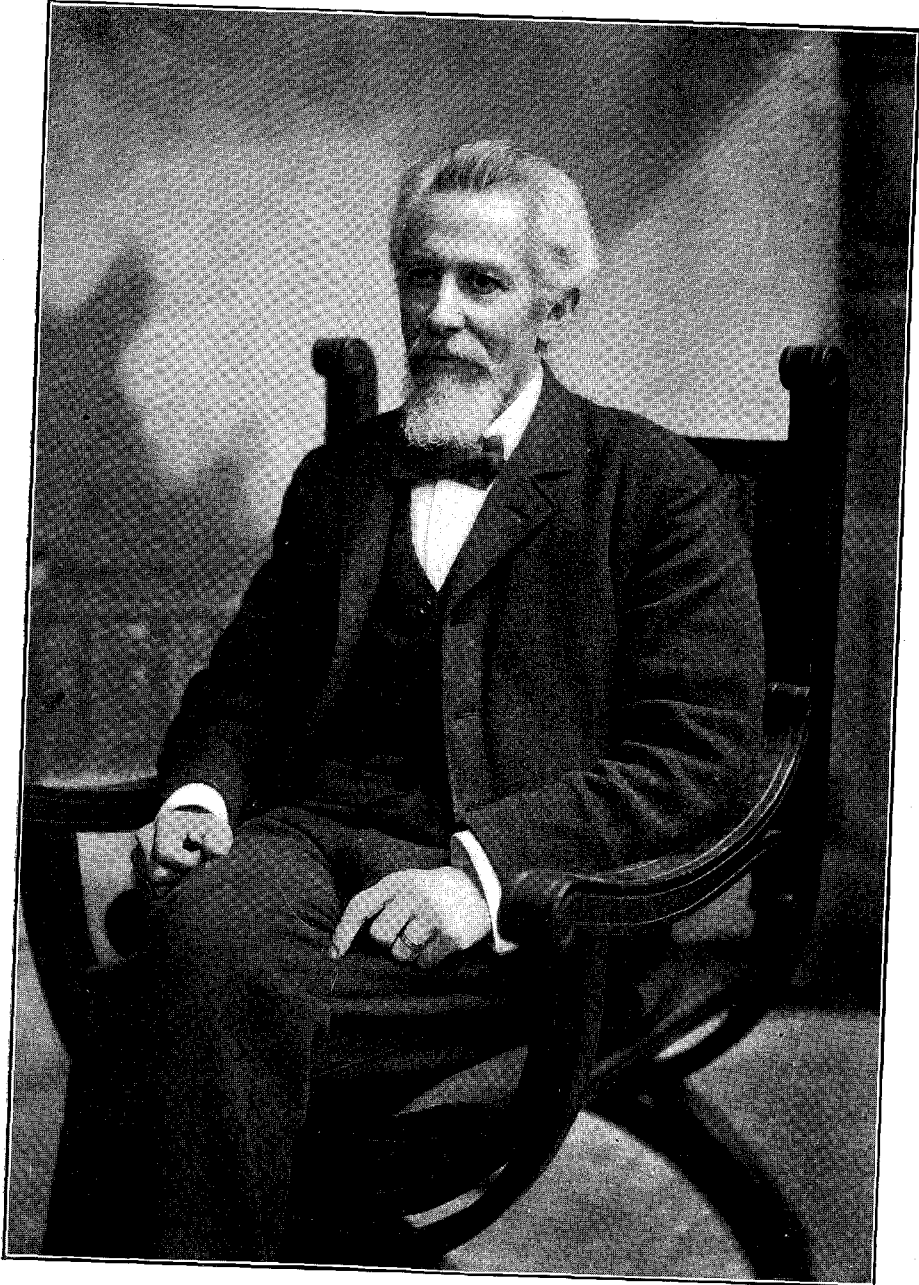
and which will appear immediately. The story of *The Puppet Crown* is based on the buying up of a government loan by an English diplomat as the basis of a political intrigue against Austria, which, at the time of the story, was contriving a *coup* to gain control of Corinthia.

As a newspaper man, Mr. MacGrath has had more than the usual newspaper man's share of rubbing up against the world. He has always been more or less of a rover. "Now and then," he writes, "I have travelled first class, but more often I have gone with the 'caboose' and the 'fourth cabin.' This buffetting did me good." His first literary effort he dropped into a corner mail-box "when no one was looking save my guiding star, which at the time was somewhat out of its orbit. I left the rest to Uncle Sam, and he saw that my contribution came back promptly. I might have become a successful plumber but for the rage I entertained for the editor who refused to brighten up his editorial page with my graceful tribute to Chloe or Daphne or some, mythological character—I forget what it was. I must have tired them out, for in less than six months after" (Mr. MacGrath was at that time eighteen years of age) "I was given a place on the reportorial staff. The first contribution I ever had the pleasure of seeing in print was an article on the improvements of a local cemetery. I believe it was due to this assignment that I became a humourist."

In 1895 Mr. MacGrath gave up active newspaper work and turned his hand to the writing of jokes and light verses. Three years ago the *Syracuse Herald* called upon him and assigned him to the editorial page as its "poet and humourist," a position which he still holds. About the same time he decided that there were only two careers open to a newspaper man—that of a politician or of a novelist. "Naturally, I chose the lesser of two evils." *Arms and the Woman* was originally a short story. The author disliked it and threw it away, but, happily, it was rescued by a newspaper friend, who declared that there was "stuff" in it for a good romance; so Mr. MacGrath started the novel. "I am positive that I rewrote

it a dozen times, and each time it seemed to grow worse. Knowing that if I continued to rewrite it I should eventually burn it up, I packed it up and sent it to the McClures, never expecting to see it again, because I sent it by mail without return postage. Two weeks later I was informed of its acceptance, and I knew that I was committed to hard labour for

life." Hillars, the broken-down journalist of the story, was an actual character. He died in reality almost as he died in romance, only it was a card-sharper—a German card-sharper—who killed him. The Princess Hildegarde was a vague, composite portrait of the sister of the King of Belgium and the niece of the late King Humbert of Italy. The episodes,



PROFESSOR EDWARD DOWDEN.

however, were purely imaginary. In regard to his methods of work, Mr. MacGrath says: "I use the celebrated midnight oil—a gallon a week; and many a pound of tobacco goes with the oil. During the day I invent jests and jingles, scribble book reviews and paragraphs. Night-time is the only time I am free to the wiles of inspiration—such as I have. I begin after dinner, and often the lamp-light melts in the light of day. The following night I tear up what I have written and rewrite it. In fact, I am never satisfied with anything I write; but this gives me the hope that, never being satisfied, I shall never write anything very bad." Mr. MacGrath is now finishing an historical romance. The scenes are laid about Syracuse in the middle of the seventeenth century, at the time when the Jesuits erected one of their missions.

Professor Edward Dowden, whose portrait we herewith present, was born at Cork,

Professor
Dowden.

May 3, 1843. He was

educated by private tutors and at Dublin University, in which he was appointed Professor of English Literature in 1867. He was Clark Lecturer in English Literature at Trinity College, Cambridge, from 1893 to 1896, and is trustee of the National Library of Ireland, president of the English Goethe Society and a commissioner of National Education in Ireland. His present wife, whom he married in 1895, is a daughter of the Very Rev. John West, Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin. Professor Dowden's most successful book, *Shakespeare: His Mind and Art*, was published in 1875; and, despite its many competitors, still holds the field and sells steadily. His *Studies in Literature* (1872) contains several fine critical essays, and in *Transcripts and Studies* (1888) the paper on Victorian Literature is one of the most illuminative studies of a period written by a contemporary critic. His *Life of Shelley* (1886), though rather roughly handled by Matthew Arnold, is the standard authority. In 1896 he delivered a series of lectures on "The French Revolution and English Literature" in connection with the sesquicentennial celebration of Princeton University. He was very popular in America, and speaks warmly of his reception in this country.

Cardigan, which began running serially in the pages of *Harper's Weekly* last month, is the first of a series of four novels which Mr. Robert W. Chambers proposes to write. Each of these books will be complete in itself, but in the four the author aims to give a history in fiction of the American Revolution. The scene of the opening chapters of *Cardigan* is laid at the home of one Sir William Johnson in western New York in the early part of 1774. Later the action moves eastward, and the book ends with a description of the Concord fight in 1775.

Mrs. Stepney Rawson, whose novel *A Lady of the Regency*, after scoring a distinct success in England, has just been published in this country, served a long apprenticeship in the writing of short stories for magazines before she attempted a long work of fiction. Mrs. Rawson has for years been a versatile journalist on the leading English women's newspapers, and has done special writing in almost every department. *A Lady of the Regency* was begun at the instigation of Mr. W. H. Wilkins, of the English firm of publishers through which the book subsequently appeared in that country. It was he who suggested to her the period of the Regency as a comparatively unworked theme in English history. Mrs. Rawson is now at work on another novel, which, however, will not be ready for publication for some time. She devoted two years to the writing of her first book.

The third of the American novel series that is being published by the Messrs. Harper is *Martin Brook*, by Mr. Morgan Bates. The story

deals with the Abolitionist movement in the North in the years just before the War of Secession. It is based upon the diary of a man who lived during that period, and one of the most extraordinary episodes is based on actual fact. Mr. Bates is a native of New York State, but he has lived for many years in the middle West, principally in Chicago. He is a successful playwright and journalist, and has held the position of editor on several Western papers. His present home is in Traverse City, Michigan. *Martin Brook* is his first novel.