

BRANDES ON NIETZSCHE.

Dr George Brandes, the Danish litterateur, was the first critic in Europe to recognise the greatness of Nietzsche. In 1888 he published an essay, which still remains the sanest introduction to his work, and this led to a "literary friendship" between the two, which endured until the final eclipse. Already Nietzsche had shown symptoms of mental instability. He suffered from a kind of megalomania; in his last book but one he had said, "I have given the Germans the profoundest book they possess." In his last book he had said, "I have given mankind the profoundest book it possesses." A few weeks before mental death overtook him he wrote to a friend declaring that he intended to summon a meeting of sovereigns in Rome to have the young German Emperor shot. This was signed Nietzsche-Caesar, while the final letter Dr. Brandes ever received from him, unstamped, undated, written in a large hand on a piece of paper ruled in pencil, such as children use, bore the signature, "The Crucified." It was thus evident, writes Dr. Brandes, "that this great mind in its final megalomania oscillated between attributing to itself the two greatest names in history so strongly contrasted."

This correspondence, together with several essays on the subject of Nietzsche's teaching and influence have now been published for the first time. Dr. Brandes makes a vigorous assault upon Herr Nordau, because the latter "has attempted with incredible coarseness to brand Nietzsche's whole life work as the production of a madman." Certainly in these letters, with the exception of that last sad one from the darkness, there is nothing to suggest any lack of balance. They deal with matters of literary interest, they express his pleasure at the prospect of more general recognition, and his delight at the success of Brandes' lectures upon him at St. Petersburg. In fact, they are just the sort of letters that an author might be expected to write to a sympathetic and appreciative admirer. The book is an interesting one, which every student of Nietzsche should read. (Heinemann.)