

bean-eating, even the procession of the black rag-doll through the streets, become more intelligible. The sixty fine and unusual photographs, mostly the author's own, with his three maps, are delightful accessories to a volume dealing with new material about Italy in a convincing and charming way.

*Florentine
yesterdays
and today's.*

Interesting mainly to the student and the antiquarian, and yet sufficiently picturesque to attract the average reader, is the Rev. J. Wood Brown's "Florence Past and Present" (Scribner). His "Past" of Florence is a very distant one indeed, and goes back to the first contributions of geology and physics to the long history—the volcanic upheaval which lifted the whole inner hill-country of Tuscany to its present level and created the new drainage-lines now existing. The gravel and sand that the flowing waters then brought down and deposited furnished the site on which the city of Florence stands to-day. The middle Val d'Arno, when man first saw it, was all woods and water. To the early inhabitants, hunting and fishing were the only possible occupations. To this fact—that the earliest ancestors of the modern Florentine were hunters and fishers—the author traces a large number of Florentine characteristics. For example, their economy at table is proverbial, their temperance in food and drink amounts to parsimony. This began when the uncertainty of the chase taught the hunter self-restraint in the use of food, and the methods of living on nut-meal till fortune should meet him again in the wood or the river. In like manner, the pet superstitions to-day are distinct survivals of the magic of the woods, derived from the hunter's skill. In time, of course, these forest-dwellers come in friendly relation with the farmers of the north and the shepherds of the south; hence trade begins, roads are made, and by the combination of road and river the seat of Florence is determined and her prosperity assured. This tale is charmingly unfolded in the first division of the book called "The Living Past," which ends with the decline of Etruscan and the rise of Roman power, and the recognition of Florence as a *municipium splendidissimum* in 82 B.C. The second division discusses "Material Survivals," and takes up such familiar sights as the Arno boats and boatmen, the Florentine carts, harness, amulets—all pointing to a woodland past. In the third division we have "The Feasts." To the average foreigner nothing seems more absurd than the customs of the numerous "festas" of the Italian people,—especially the Ceppo and Befana, the crickets captured and carried home in little cages on Ascension Day, the feast of lanterns on the seventh of September. But when these are traced, as they are here, to ancient myths, when these strange rites are shown to have a general line of inheritance from customs natural to men of the woods, and receiving from them a magical interpretation,—then the noise and masking, the dances and