

Mrs. Edith Wharton's new book, "Italian Backgrounds," is published to-day by Charles Scribner's Sons. There will be nine chapters—"An Alpine Posting Inn," "A Midsummer Week's Dream," "The Sanctuaries of the Pennine Alps," "What the Hermits Saw," "A Tuscan Shrine," "Sub Umbra Lillorum," "March in Italy," "Picturesque Milan," and "Italian Backgrounds." She writes in this last chapter:

As with the study of Italian pictures, so it is with Italy herself. The country is divided, not in partes tres, but in two; a foreground and a background. The foreground is the property of the guidebook and of its product, the mechanical sight-seer; the background, that of the dawdler, the dreamer, and the serious student of Italy. * * * It is not too fanciful to say that each of the great masterpieces of Italy holds the key to some secret garden of the imagination. One must know Titian and Giorgione to enjoy the intimacy of the Friullan Alps, Coma da Conegliano to taste the full savor of the strange Euganean landscape, Palladio and Sarsoveno to appreciate the frivolous villa-architecture of the Brenta, nay, the dome of Brunelleschi and Michael Angelo to feel the happy curve of some chapel cupola in a nameless village of the hills.

These impressions of familiar Italy's backgrounds present phases of art and architecture overlooked by the conventional tourist. The book is to have twelve illustrations and a frontispiece, showing a group of the "Crucifixion" from San Vivaldo. The other reproductions are the "Municipio" and "Chiesa del Miracoli" of Brescia; the inner quadrangle at Oropa, the main court of the Sacro Monte at Varallo, a characteristic street, the "little palace of the garden," the red lions of an ancient porch, an Italian sky in March, court of Palazzo Marino now the Municipio, the tower of St. Stefano, and the church at Saronno. The pictures were made by Peixotto.

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