

GOLDEN DAYS IN MANY LANDS.



FLORENCE FROM THE PIAZZALE MICHELANGIOLLO.

In the right hand corner of the picture is Santa Croce, in the centre is the Duomo, and in the extreme left rises the tall tower of the Palazzo Vecchio.

BEING STRAY NOTES OF FIVE YEARS OF TRAVEL.

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FLORENCE, THE LILY AT THE FOOT OF THE APENNINES.

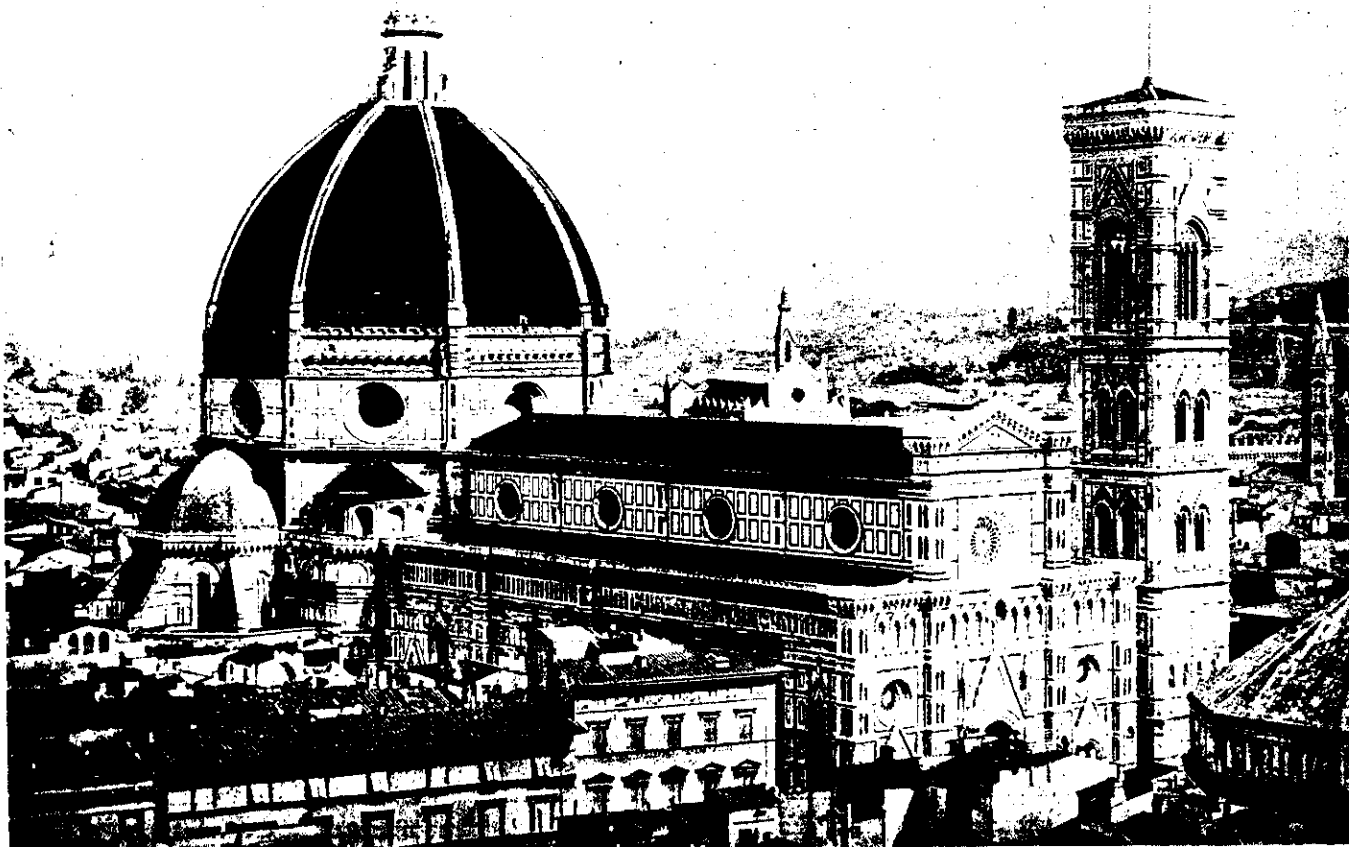
THE lily—how it has entered into the ideal of the Florentines! Superstition ran high in the early days of Christianity, and the origin of the Florentine coat of arms is a pretty story. While a battle with an invading army of barbarians was raging on the hills towards Fiesole, the

aged Bishop Zanobius was praying earnestly for the preservation of his city, Florence. His prayers rising from the valley to the heavens were answered by the appearance, in the midst of the battle, of a young maiden—Saint Reparata—who, carrying in her hand a blood-red banner, on which was embro-

ered a snow-white lily, put fear into the heart of the barbarian foe, and the day was won for the Florentines. This lily on a red ground, with various additions and modifications, has been adopted as the Florentine coat of arms since that day, 405 A.D. When journeying from Milan, our first glimpse of Florence is the dis-

tant one from the mountains; and as we look down upon her, stretching away on either side of the Arno, she appears very peaceful and self-contained. But, while descending the hills among the vineyards, cornfields, and sweet-scented gardens, there are moments of blackness, as we pass into the depth of a tunnel, that cast a shadow over the brilliancy of the scene, even as did those wars and feuds, that have been as thunder-clouds darkening for brief periods the sunny history of Florence. Though by nature the Florentines are of the nervous temperament that turns instinctively to an artistic rather than to a military life, yet in the middle ages their pride rose to the necessity of the times, and they conquered here and conquered there, and grew wealthy and influential. They enslaved the surrounding cities, but had much ado to keep peace between the nobles within their own walls, Guelph banished Ghibelline, and Ghibelline banished Guelph, and in later years, when Biondi strove against Neri, it was only a continuation of the same old feud of noble against noble. Yet, in spite of the fact that the city must have been in perpetual disturbance with these rival houses carrying their vengeance even into the city streets, the dreamy, sensitive nature of the Florentine was planning and developing and furthering the kingdom of art in a manner that must seem for ever wonderful. It is to us almost incredible to think that Dante himself fought in the battle of Campaldino, and that the beautiful campanile of the shepherd-artist Giotto was rising even while the lower classes were revolting to gain the reins of government.

War and strife came to them from within and without, but the nature of the Florentines asserted itself throughout, and never for long do they seem to have forgotten the things beautiful. Today, as we visit the city, and learn the story of Cimabue, of Giotto, of Ghiberti, of Michael Angelo, we cannot doubt that Florence was the art-mother of Italy for well-nigh four centuries. The progression from Cimabue to Raphael—who, though not a native of Florence, owed much to her influence—was steady, and Florentine art attained its zenith in the sixteenth century. It is of art that we think when we are in Florence, and of the wonderful impetus that this city gave to the whole world of art during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Not so much do we think of the enormous



FLORENCE, THE CATHEDRAL AND GIOTTO'S CAMPANILE FROM THE DOME OF SAN LORENZO.