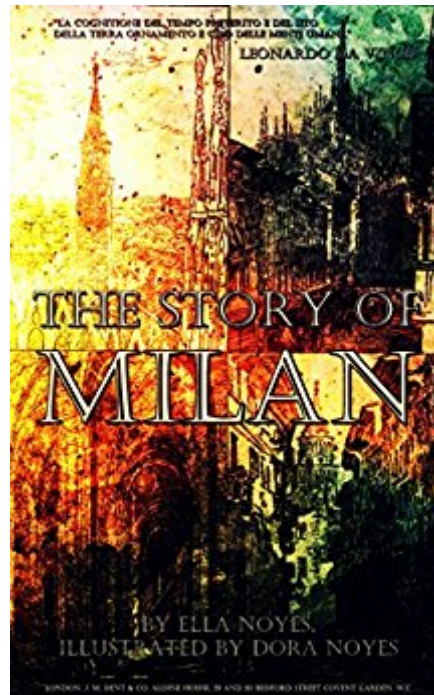




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The Story Of Milan (Illustrations)



Synopsis

Everybody has been in Milan, but who knows Milan? The traveller in search of the picturesque and mediocrity sees nothing to arrest him "except comfortable hotels" in a city which seems to tell only of yesterday. A glance at the Cathedral, at St. Ambrogio, at the most famous of the pictures, and he hurries on. Yet a little longer stay reveals a wealth of artistic interest in the many fine churches, in the rich galleries and museums, and much also that is worth learning even in the outward aspect of the city in the present day. The historic buildings have mostly fallen, the old crooked ways have given place to broad thoroughfares, the picturesque life of the past has been smothered by the sombre bustle of modern commercialism. But her heritage of beauty is to some extent inalienable. She remains always Italian. Colour and atmosphere lend an indestructible charm even to her modernity. The warm brick of the buildings against the limpid blue sky, the gold and grey of sunshine and shadow, the shining canals that border some of the further streets with a still and pensive melancholy, make a lovely and characteristic harmony still, as in the days of the Quattrocentist artists who painted them in the backgrounds of their Madonnas and San Roccas. And there are some old streets left, mostly in the heart of the city, such as the Via del Pesce and the Via Tre Alberghi, long cobbled alleys ribboned with triple lines of pavement, where the tall houses and bowed-out balconies of curious ironwork, rusted by age and weather, if they cannot remember the days of Milan's earlier glory, must have known at least something of the sad centuries of bondage which followed, before they shook to the roar of the Cinque Giornate sixty years ago. The compass of this small volume has made it impossible to tell otherwise than summarily of the great past of this city and of her artistic riches to-day. I have had to pass over, or barely mention, many noteworthy things. I am especially sorry that I could not include the places of interest in the immediate neighbourhood. A visit to the Certosa of Pavia, which sums up all the aims and achievements of Lombard Renaissance art, is necessary for an appreciation of the Milanese sculptors and painters, while the associations of the famous building with Gian Galeazzo Visconte and with the Sforza princes, make it a part of Milanese story. The old Church of Chiaravalle, with its incomparable Lombard-Gothic tower and its trecento frescoes, and picturesque Monza, where that historic emblem and wonder of twelfth century goldsmiths' art, the Iron Crown of Lombardy, is preserved with other priceless treasures, ought not to be missed by the traveller. The main facts of Milanese story are well known, and may be found, not only in the native chroniclers and historians, but also in many modern books dealing with Milan and with Italian history generally. Mongeri's *L'Arte in Milano*, and the writings of Count Malaguzzi Valeri, especially his *Milano in the series Italia Illustrata*, have been my chief help in the topographical and artistic part of this book, and

I have also made use of the works of Signor Luca Beltrami, Mrs. Ady and others. For the painters and pictures I have depended on Morelli, the acknowledged authority on Lombard art, and have consulted besides the writings of Dr. Gustavo Frizzoni, of Mr. Herbert Cook, and other modern critics.

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