TUSCANY AND BEYOND
A selection of travel literature, published between 1876 and 1928, in the Harold Acton Library

from Elizabeth Robins: *Italy from a Tricycle*, 1886

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This guide to a selection of books from our collection was put together by Michele Amedei, intern from the Università degli Studi di Firenze. It is one of a series of three: Tuscany, Tuscany and Beyond, Villas and Gardens.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUGUSTUS HARE</td>
<td>Cities of Northern &amp; Central Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATHANIEL HAWTHorne</td>
<td>Passages from the French &amp; Italian notebooks of Nathaniel Hawthorne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KATHERINE HOOKER</td>
<td>Wayfarers in Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WILLIAM DEAN HOWELS</td>
<td>Italian Journeys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUBBARD HITCHINSON</td>
<td>From Rome to Florence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDWARD HUTTON</td>
<td>The Cities of Romagna &amp; the Marches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HENRY JAMES</td>
<td>Italian Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLAVE MURIEL POTTER</td>
<td>A Little Pilgrimage in Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELIZABETH ROBINS</td>
<td>Italy from a Tricycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FREDERICK SEYMOUR</td>
<td>Up Hill &amp; Down Dale in Ancient Eturia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FREDERICK TREVES</td>
<td>The Country of ‘The Ring &amp; the Book’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LINDA VILLARI</td>
<td>Capri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LINDA VILLARI</td>
<td>On Tuscan Hills &amp; Venetian Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EGERTON RYERSON WILLIAMS JR.</td>
<td>Hill Towns of Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HELEN ZIMMERN</td>
<td>Rimini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WALTER MACLAREN</td>
<td>A biography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOSEPH PENNELL</td>
<td>A biography</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Augustus John Cuthbert Hare, *Cities of Northern and Central Italy: in Three Volumes*, London (Daldy, Isbister & Co.) 1876 [914.5 HAR]

Augustus Hare (1834–1903) was an English traveller who was born in Rome on 13 March 1834. Hare was the author of *Florence* (1884, published in various editions), *Walks in Rome* (1871) and *Days Near Rome* (1875). *Cities of Northern and Central Italy* is a book composed of three large volumes. The first concentrates on the north Italian territories, starting with the Riviera of Ponente and then Genoa, Turin, the Val d’Aosta region, Vercelli, Novara, and finally Milan, Pavia, Como, and the Lake Region and the further southeast Lake, Garda, Mantua, Padua and the Friulian Alps. The second volume covers the main sites of the Po Valley (Veneto) beginning with Venice, Chioggia, Treviso and Udine, then on to Ferrara and the Adriatic Coast. Hare continues to Bologna, Ravenna and down to Urbino, Gubbio and back into Tuscany where he pauses to describe Pisa, Volterra, Lucca, Pistoia and Prato. The third and final volume is dedicated entirely to Tuscany: Florence and its surroundings, the Casentino and the places linked with St. Francis such as La Verna (there called ‘Vernia’). Finally Augustus Hare writes of Arezzo, Cortona, Lake Trasimeno, Assisi and Foligno. Throughout, the book is accompanied by quotations from other books and British art magazines such as *The Cornhill Magazine*.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Passages from the French and Italian note-books of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, Boston (Houghton, Mifflin and Co.) 1884 [C 810 HAW]

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–1864), the American novelist and short story writer, was born in Salem, Massachusetts. Among his best-known works are *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) and *The Marble Faun* (1860). *Passages from the French and Italian note-books* is the story of Hawthorne’s journey in Italy, which started from Marseilles in the south of France in January 1858. When the writer arrived in Rome, he visited the most important sites relating to history and art. From Rome he made his way to Florence, visiting the most interesting places along the way: Terni, Borghetto, Foligno, Perugia, Lake Trasimeno, Arezzo and
finally the Valdarno. Arriving in Florence, he documented with interest his meeting with the American sculptor Hiram Powers who moved from America to Florence in 1837. After a visit to Siena and its countryside, Hawthorne, between late 1858 and early 1859, returned to Rome where he lived for a brief time, and then returned to France in May 1859. He concluded his European trip visiting Switzerland and England.

Katherine Hooker, *Wayfarers in Italy*, London (George Newnes), 1902 [C 914.5 HOO]
In this book Katherine Hooker describes a journey from Milan to Florence and on to Arezzo and Siena. The journey eventually continues to the province and city of Viterbo, to the Etruscan area in the north of Lazio, Assisi, Perugia to Lake Trasimeno, San Gimignano, Volterra and Lucca. Katherine concludes her itinerary in Venice. The entire book is provided with a large number of photographs that reproduce some of places Katherine describes in the text. She traces a short history of each site visited, and also gives beautiful and fascinating anecdotes.

William Dean Howells, *Italian Journeys*, Leipzig (Bernhard Tauchnitz) 1883 [914.5 HOW]
William Dean Howells (1837-1920) was an American writer and novelist. Howells was one of the originators of the American realist school. *Italian Journeys* takes the reader through Italian cities, especially those of the north. The book is composed of several chapters: the first two cover trips of a certain importance (‘The Road to Rome from Venice’ and ‘Padua’ with a pilgrimage to the house of Petrarch at Arquà) while the remainder cover ‘Minor travels’ and include visits to cities such as Pisa, Ferrara, Trieste, Bassano del Grappa, Antonio Canova’s birthplace, Possagno, and, finally, Como, Vicenza, Verona and Parma.

Hubbard Hutchinson, *From Rome to Florence*, New York – London (G. P. Putnam’s Sons) 1928 [914.55 HUT]
This book covers the cities met during the journey from Rome to Florence. Hubbard Hutchinson explores the history of the
monuments of Viterbo and Orvieto, and devotes many pages to small towns such as Todi, Montefalco, Spoleto and Assisi, giving us an insight into the architecture and art works of these places. The book also tells us about the monuments of Cortona, Arezzo and its hinterland, and concludes with Siena, Montepulciano, Pienza, San Gimignano and Volterra. The last page has a map showing ‘Italia centrale’. The entire book is illustrated with drawings and maps by Coleman C. Moser.

Edward Hutton, *The Cities of Romagna and the Marches*, London (Methuen & Co. Ltd.) 1913 [914.54 HUT]

Edward Hutton (1875 - 1969) was a prolific British author of travel books and articles and reviews on Italian art history and books on Italian literary subjects. Among his travel books are *Florence and Northern Tuscany with Genoa* (1907), *Siena and Southern Tuscany* (1910) and *Ravenna, a Study* (1913). This book, *The Cities of Romagna and the Marches*, takes us along a route that includes both the Adriatic regions of Romagna and the Marche located in central Italy. The author first travels through Ravenna (including the Abbey of Pomposa), Ferrara, Bologna, Imola and Faenza, Rimini, San Marino and Pesaro up to the Marche, and then moves on to Ancona, Loreto, Ascoli, Macerata and Urbino. The author describes the individual works of art that the traveller may encounter en route. The book contains photographs of works of art (bass-reliefs, paintings, sculptures and relics) and photographs related to these region. It is also enriched with a series of illustrations by Frank Crisp, a British artist killed in the First World War.

*The Hutton Collection in the Archive of the British Institute of Florence contains Edward Hutton’s papers.*

Henry James, *Italian Hours*, Boston (Houghton, Mifflin and Co.), 1909 [C 820.8 JAM]

*Italian Hours* consists of a collection of essays written by Henry James (1843-1916) over a period of almost forty years. James describes his rapport with different Italian territories such as Venice, Rome and its countryside, Tuscany (Florence, Siena, and other small cities) and Ravenna. Like the English novelist Vernon Lee, Henry James was fascinated by the *Genius Loci*, whose origins
are in romantic ideas. *Genius Loci* is ‘an encounter with mysterious forces that stun the visitors with their presence having condensed the memory of a fateful events’ (Attilio Brilli). When James visits Cortona, near Lake Trasimeno, he describes his experience in the light of the *Genius Loci*: ‘Between Perugia and Cortona lies the large weedy water of Thrasymene, turned into a witching word for ever by Hannibal’s recorded victory over Rome. Dim such records have become to us and remote such realities, he is yet a passionless pilgrim who doesn’t, as he passes, of a heavy summer’s day, feel the air and the light and the very faintness of the breeze all charged and haunted with them, all interfused as with the wasted ache of experience and with the vague historic gaze. Processions of indistinguishable ghosts bore me company to Cortona itself, most sturdily ancient of Italian towns. It must have been a seat of ancient knowledge even when Hannibal and Flaminius came to the shock of battle, and have looked down afar from its grey ramparts on the contending swarm with something of the philosophic composure suitable to a survivor of Pelasgic and Etruscan revolution. These grey ramparts are in great part still visible, and form the chief attraction of Cortona’ (pp. 337-338). *Italian Hours* was illustrated by the American artist Joseph Pennell (1857-1926).

**Olave Muriel Potter, *A Little Pilgrimage in Italy*, London (Constable & Co. Ltd.) 1911**

[914.5 POT]

In 1909 Olave Muriel Potter published *The Colour of Rome: Historical, Personal & Local*, which was illustrated, like *A Little Pilgrimage*, by Yoshio Markino. *A Little Pilgrimage in Italy* describes a trip from Arezzo to Siena and its hinterland, to Assisi, Gubbio, Ancona, Loreto, Ravenna, and from San Marino, in Emilia Romagna, through Urbino, Foligno, Spoleto, Terni (with its waterfalls), Narni, Orvieto, Viterbo and finally Rome. Potter describes places, monuments and cultural traditions relating to the places she travels through and she devotes an entire chapter to ‘Siena and the Palio’ (p. 58), and to ‘Hannibal’s Thrasymene’ (p. 129). This book has various types of illustration all done by Markino.

Elizabeth Robins Pennell (1855-1936) was an American writer, married to Joseph Pennell (1857-1926), an American illustrator and fellow writer. The pair were friends and correspondents of James MacNeill Whistler (1834-1903), the American painter about whom they produced a biography. *Italy From a Tricycle* is an interesting journey from Florence to Rome made by Elizabeth and Joseph Pennell in the company of their tricycle. The article is divided into two parts: the first considers mainly Tuscan territories (from Florence to Arezzo and its countryside); the second covers areas ranging from Monte Oliveto (near Siena) to Rome and its countryside. In this article Elizabeth and Joseph note their experiences and the meetings they had in Tuscany, Umbria and the Roman countryside. They recount the hilarity and enjoyment of locals when they passed through the centre of Florence on their strange vehicle (there is an interesting illustration showing Elizabeth and her husband with their tricycle on the Ponte Vecchio) and into the centre of small towns in the Tuscan and Umbrian countryside. Their tricycle was in fact unusual for the peasantry and townspeople who called out: ‘Bellina!’ (‘beautiful!’), ‘un nuovo cavallo’ (‘a new horse!’), or ‘una tramvai!’ (‘a tram!’). All the illustrations (some of them are particularly interesting) are drawn by Joseph Pennell.

Frederick Seymour, *Up Hill and Down Dale in Ancient Etruria*, London (T. Fischer Unwin) 1910 [937.5 SEY]

Frederick Seymour was an expert in Etruscan and Italian art history and dedicated a book to *Siena and her artists* (1907). *Up Hill and Down Dale in Ancient Etruria* records the Etruscan places between Tuscany, Lazio and Umbria. In this book Seymour writes about Volterra and other small towns such as Vetulonia, Populonia, Ceveteri and Vulci, and also about Orvieto, Viterbo and its environs. This book is divided into two parts: the first is dedicated to the history of the Etruscan population and the second to Etruscan monuments and museums that the traveller might come
across. The book is provided with a great number of maps of ancient Etruscan sites and illustrations of artefacts from the archaeological museum of Florence.

Frederick Treves (1853–1923) was an English surgeon and the author of many medical books. He’s probably most well-known for the care he took of Joseph Merrick, the so-called ‘Elephant Man’. Treves also travelled, and wrote about those travels, in books, such as *The Other Side of the Lantern* (1905), *The Cradle of the Deep* (1908) and *Uganda for a Holiday* (1910). Treves also travelled to Italy to investigate the topography of Robert Browning’s *The Ring and the Book*, which provided the basis for this book, *The Country of “The Ring and the Book”*. As Treves writes in the preface of this book, the purpose of it ‘is to describe the scene of a story of two hundred years ago, the story of the Franceschini, husband and wife, and of the priest who came between them [...]. It is a tragic story [...]. The scene of this tale of the Franceschini is laid in the heart of Italy, in that gracious stretch of valley and hill which lies between
Florence and Rome' (p. vii). Following this project, therefore, the author divides the book into three parts: ‘History’ (pp. 3-94), which traces the history of Browning’s book, ‘The Country of the Story’ (pp. 97-239) and ‘The people of the story as they appear in the poem’ (pp. 243-295). The whole book is documented with late nineteenth century photographs of farmers, Tuscan farmhouses, ‘taken by the Author at various seasons of the year’ (p. xiii), particularly interesting for their cultural and anthropological value. At the end of the volume there are two reproductions of plans of Rome in 1676.

Linda Villari (1836-1905) was an English writer and wife of the Italian historian and politician Pasquale Villari. Linda gives an historical and anthropological history of the island of Capri. When Linda Villari wrote this article, Capri was frequented by colonies of foreign artists from France, Switzerland and England, including the English painter and illustrator of the article, Walter Maclaren who belonged to the Etruscan School, founded between 1883 and 1884 by Giovanni Costa and a group of English artists. In this article Linda Villari describes the lives of the Capri people, their habits and customs, and often she traces the links between ancient and modern cultural traditions. Among the most interesting illustrations by Maclaren, I would like to point out the fishermen on the beach (‘Taking in the nets after drying’, p. 79), the ‘Tarantella’ (p. 84), Capri ‘Goatherds’ (p. 85), and ‘Olive picking’ (p. 88).

[914.5 VIL]
Linda White Villari (1836-1905), the English wife of the Italian historian and politician Pasquale Villari, was the author of several books and also a translator. The first part of this book tells some stories about the hills and valleys of Tuscany and it is introduced by the contemplation of the Tuscan landscape viewed from a villa on the hills above Florence (Villa Gamberraia at Settignano). In the first
part of this book Linda Villari writes about Settignano and its monuments and also about other Tuscan towns which, like Settignano, were built on hills (for example, Barga near Lucca). Linda Villari devotes an entire chapter to the city of Siena and its Palio and another – very interesting – to the ‘homes of the plaster-image men’: these were the famous “figurinai”, men from the Lima Valley and the surroundings of the Serchio Valley in the Province of Lucca. These were the first Italian migrants to move across the continent and beyond, and were organized into “companies” with a “head” and several apprentices. They finally reached the furthest places for manufacture and sale of their plaster statues. The second part of this book is entirely devoted to Venice and tells of its most evocative places, such as San Samuele. It tells also of the least known places of the Venetian lagoon, including the isolated monastery of San Francesco nel Deserto. The last chapters are devoted to the Arsenale of the Venetian lagoon. The book is illustrated by Blanche Strahan Lemon, wife of an English painter, Arthur Lemon, who lived in Florence in the 1880s and who was in contact with the group of the Macchiaioli painters in Florence.

Egerton Ryerson Williams Jr., *Hill Towns of Italy*, Boston and New York (Houghton, Mifflin and Co.) 1903 [914.5 WIL]

*Hill Towns of Italy* is a report upon the hill cities between the Tyrrhenian Sea and the Adriatic Coast of central Italy. This region, when Williams wrote his book, was neglected by travellers because, as the author writes in the preface, the territory between Lazio, Umbria, south Tuscany and the Marche, was ‘inaccessible’, and there was ‘lack of the comfort of modern life’ and it was necessary ‘in visiting them of having a knowledge of their language’ (p. ix). In this territory, according to Williams, was born ‘that wonderful Renaissance of Religion, Humanity, Science, Literature, and Art, which dispelled the darkness of the Middle Ages’ (p. viii). It is a region of a ‘natural beauty’, of ‘lovely plains which the mountains hold within their grasp, – the wondrous, golden plain of Umbria, the fertile table-land of Etruria, the luxuriant Valle di Chiana, the pastoral valleys of the upper Tiber and the Arno’ (p. ix). This book
has a great number of photographs of the places and works of art mentioned by Williams in the text.

**Helen Zimmern, *Rimini*, ‘The English Illustrated Magazine’, 1891-92, pp. 775-783 [CP 820.8 ENG]**

Helen Zimmern (1846-1934) was a German-British writer and translator. From the 1870s she lived in Florence. This article is an historical journey in Rimini. Helen visits the city and its main monuments in relation to their history: she dedicates important descriptions to the historical buildings linked to the figure of Sigismondo Malatesta (1417-1468). She describes the Malatesta Temple, the fortress and castle. This article could be considered an historical essay: for each monument Helen Zimmern provides precise historical detail. The article is illustrated by the Italian painter Norberto Pazzini (1856-1937) an artist linked to England: he was part of the Etruscan School, founded in the winter of 1883 and 1884 by Giovanni Costa, an Italian painter and patriot, and a group of English painters (including Matthew Ridley Corbet, Edith Corbet and George Howard, IX Earl of Carlisle).

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**Walter Maclaren**

We know little about Walter Maclaren’s life. We do know that he was closely tied to Capri, an island frequented in the nineteenth century by artists from France, Switzerland and especially England. As Linda Villari recounts in her article *Capri*, illustrated by Walter Maclaren, ‘there are many studios on the island, and England and France are specially well represented’ (L. Villari, *Capri*, ‘The English Illustrated Magazine’, 1887-1888, p. 88). We know that Maclaren was part of the Etruscan School founded in the winter of 1883 and 1884 by Giovanni Costa, an Italian painter, and a group of British artists. There is a little information about Maclaren’s sojourn in Capri but it is certain that he had long-standing relationship with the island; Linda Villari reports that Maclaren had studio in Capri ‘for many years’ (*ivi*, p. 88). The most interesting testimony of Maclaren’s link with Capri, are the illustrations for
Villari’s article (Capri, cit.). These seven illustrations depict the customs and traditions of the Capri people. Maclaren shows ‘Costanziella and Carmela tripping down the hill-side, with their goats’ (ivi, p. 85), and portrays two young women ‘Olive Picking’ (ivi, p. 88). The women of Capri, writes Linda, are ‘exceptionally charming’, ‘bright-eyed, smiling, vivacious creatures, with classic heads and a statuesque grace and freedom of movement’ (ivi, p. 84): Maclaren portrays a group a women while they are ‘waiting for the market boat’ (ivi, p. 80), or depicts a fishermen’s wife ‘at Santa Lucia’, looking towards Capri (p. 81). Maclaren’s portrayal of a group of people dancing a ‘tarantella’ accentuates the ‘statuesque grace and freedom of movement’ described by Linda (ivi, p. 84).

**Joseph Pennell**
Joseph Pennell (1857-1926) was an American painter and writer. His relationship with Italy began in 1883 when he came to Tuscany to illustrate a series of articles by William Dean Howells, published in 1886 as Tuscan Cities. In the 1880s Pennell befriended many of the English and Americans in Italy, such as Vernon Lee, Evelyn Pickering and Mary Robinson with whom he travelled to Arezzo, Perugia, Assisi, Gubbio. He was particularly entranced by Urbino. In 1884 Pennell was in Italy with his wife, Elizabeth Robins, to illustrate their Italian trip by tricycle which appeared in the American ‘The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine’ in 1886. In 1901 Pennell come back to Italy to execute drawings for Maurice Hewlett’s book, The Road in Tuscany: on this trip, Pennell went from Lucca to Certaldo, Poggibonsi and San Gimignano and visited other lesser-known Tuscan cities. An important collection of drawings of this trip survives and is now in the ‘Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe’ of the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. Lucia Monaci Moran has devoted a book to the collection: La Toscana di Joseph Pennell tra Otto e Novecento, Firenze (Leo S. Olschki ed.), 2004 [741.0942 PEN]. In 1909 Pennell illustrated Henry James’s Italian Hours. Some of these illustrations have a strong Romantic element. I suggest taking a look at the ‘Castel Gandolfo’ (Henry James, Italian Hours, London [Houghton, Mufflin and Co.], 1909, p. 54), ‘The Colonnade of St. Peter’s, Rome’ (ivi, p. 210) and ‘The Arno’ (ivi, p. 380).