

The din of battle and of slaughter
 rose :
 He saw God stand upon the weaker
 side,
 That sank in seeming loss before its
 foes ;
 Many there were who made great haste
 and sold
 Unto the coming enemy their swords.
 He scorned their gifts of fame, and
 power, and gold,
 And underneath their soft and flowery
 words
 Heard the cold serpent hiss ; therefore
 he went
 And humbly joined him to the weaker
 part,
 Fanatic named, and fool, yet well con-
 tent
 So he could be the nearer to God's
 heart,
 And feel its solemn pulses sending
 blood
 Through all the widespread veins of
 endless good."

Tuscan Cities. By WILLIAM D. HOWELLS. With illustrations from drawings and etchings by Joseph Pennell and others. Boston : Houghton, Mifflin & Co. Price \$3.50.

Admirers of Mr. W. D. Howells find him at his best in his delineation of character and picturesque half humorous description of incident and adventure. Persons who have neither the time nor the taste for the microscopic observation and minute descriptions of his realistic stories, will find here his matchless literary skill employed upon themes of broad and perennial interest and of thrilling romantic and historic association. His long residence in Italy as United States Consul gave him the opportunity of studying the institutions of the country and the social, domestic and economic relations and conditions of the people, in a way which no chance tourists and comparatively few foreign residents have the opportunity of doing.

In his charming volume, entitled "Venetian Days," he has done for the "City of the Sea" what Story, in his inimitable "Rôba di Roma," has done for Rome. In the present volume he treats in the same reminiscent, poetical and æsthetic man-

ner—a manner which reminds one sometimes of Washington Irving and sometimes, in its quaint humour, of Mark Twain—the chief cities of Tuscany. Nearly half the volume is devoted to *La Bella Firenze*, the ever beautiful Florence, city of art and song, city of tragic history and romantic adventure, city of Dante and Savonarola—a city where every step is on historic ground. Scarcely an aspect of Florentine life is overlooked. To turn over these pages and look at Mr. Pennell's exquisite etchings of Val d'Arno, of the Bargello, of the Signoria, of the Loggia dei Lanzi, is like walking again those streets, and breathing again that enchanted air.

The second study is devoted to the lofty, wind-swept city of Sienna, whose great square and mast-like tower surpasses in picturesque beauty even that of Florence. Rather unjustly, we think, the author applies the undeserved epithet of "pitiless Pisa" to the beautiful city of the Duomo; the Baptistery, the Campo Santo, and the exquisite "leaning miracle." Industrious Lucca, Pistoja, Prato, and Fiesole, are in turn described and illustrated. The illustrations are not the ordinary photographs or mechanical processes very largely employed nowadays, but exquisite etchings or pen-and-ink drawings, full of artistic feeling, where every line and every shadow adds to the poetic value of the drawing. To these ample justice is done by the printing on the thick cream-laid paper. This charming volume, to our taste, is worth a dozen ordinary books of travel, and is one of the most delightful souvenirs of Italy that we know.

The Virgin Mary, and Other Sermons. Preached in New Richmond Church, McCaul Street, Toronto, by JOHN ELLIS LANCELEY, and published by request. Pp. 301. Toronto: William Briggs. Price \$1.00.

We are glad to see such thoughtful volumes as this, and others which have recently appeared, from the pens of our Methodist ministers.