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EARLY CHRONICLERS OF ITALY.

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EARLY CHRONICLERS OF EUROPE.

ITALY.

BY

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PREFACE.



IN attempting to give a popular account of the Italian chroniclers of the Middle Ages, I have tried to avoid all unnecessary display of erudition, and to present the book in as simple a form and as free from quotations and notes as possible. If I have not been able to keep myself rigorously to this rule, it has been because I desired as far as I could to make the book not wholly without value to more special students, since, if I am not mistaken, this is the first work which professes expressly to narrate the history of medieval Italian chronography. Hence I have made a diligent study in the best editions of the text of all the authors mentioned in this book, and before passing judgment upon them have tried to see all that others had thought and written on the same points.

As for the general structure of the book, if I have been sometimes rather diffuse in treating of the various historic periods which it traverses, I trust that I may be forgiven for this, considering that it is not easy, nor would it be a good plan, to speak of historical writers, without taking into account the times in which they lived and of which they wrote. Thus I have often been led to enlarge on the lives of the writers whose works I was examining, and this I have done because it seemed to me that in no other way could I give so clear an idea of the times described by them, and of the reasons why they wrote. In Italy more than elsewhere the history of the Middle Ages was related by men who took an active part in the events which they recorded, from the earliest to the latest times, from Cassiodorus and Gregory the Great to Albertinus Mussatus, Dino Compagni and Giovanni Villani. Also, in order to make the reader better acquainted with the disposition, nature, and style of the various chronicles, I have introduced long and numerous extracts from them, translated from the Latin, Greek, or Italian originals. These passages have been translated by my wife, who has also given its English garb to the