

torrents foaming after recent rains, and from the outlines of the ridges over which a young moon was shining. But now I felt more than ever that my last end was approaching, and that the days, even the hours, of my respite from reality were numbered. As I looked out of the window, two lines of Horace came back to me, which turned themselves, as I thought of them, into sad homely English:—

Day is thrust out of its place by day,
And new moon after new moon hastes to wane.

My last moon of retreat had indeed waned already. I realised this for good and all, as I knew I should, during my first day in Florence. Florence may be old; Florence may be full of memories; but the life of the town to-day is as modern as the life of London: the only difference is that it is shabbier and less interesting, and it appears doubly shabby by comparison with the buildings that look reproach on it. These old historical buildings, all of them seemed to me like stained-glass windows with no light behind them. The worldly pride and the spiritual life that had once given them meaning, both alike were faded. To many people Florence is eloquent in every corner, and, if we may believe them, it speaks straight to their hearts. As for me, with the exception of a few palaces, it gave me two memories only which I cared to take away with me—only two with any serious meaning.

One of these was a half-hour I spent in the cathedral on a rainy afternoon one Sunday. The