

**THE STORY OF IDA:
EPITAPH ON AN
ETRURIAN TOMB**

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The Story of Ida: Epitaph on an Etrurian Tomb by Francesca Alexander & J. Ruskin

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FRANCESCA ALEXANDER & J. RUSKIN

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In the last ray of Sunset.
And the last day of the Year

1872.

THE STORY OF IDA:

EPITAPH ON AN ETRURIAN TOMB.

BY

FRANCESCA.

EDITED, WITH PREFACE, BY

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CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, OXFORD; AND SLADE PROFESSOR
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GEORGE ALLEN,

SUNNYSIDE, ORPINGTON, KENT.

1883.

211. 076.



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PREFACE.

FOR now some ten or twelve years I have been asking every good writer whom I knew, to write some part of what was exactly true, in the greatest of the sciences, that of Humanity. It seemed to me time that the Poet and Romance-writer should become now the strict historian of days which, professing the openest proclamation of themselves, kept yet in secrecy all that was most beautiful, all that was most woful, in the multitude of their unshepherded souls. And, during these years of unanswered petitioning, I have become more and more convinced that the wholesomest antagonism to whatever is dangerous in the temper, or

foolish in the extravagance, of modern Fiction, would be found in sometimes substituting for the artfully-combined improbability, the careful record of providentially ordered Fact.

Providentially, I mean, not in the fitting together of evil so as to produce visible good,—but in the enforcement, though under shadows which mean but the difference between finite and infinite knowledge, of certain laws of moral retribution which enough indicate for our guidance, the Will, and for our comfort, the Presence, of the Judge and Father of men.

It might be thought that the function of such domestic history was enough fulfilled by the frequency and full detail of modern biography. But lives in which the public are interested are scarcely ever worth writing. For the most part compulsorily artificial, often affectedly so,—on the whole, fortunate beyond ordinary rule,—and, so far as the men are really greater than others, unintelligible to the common reader,—the lives of statesmen,