

exquisitely delicate and clear, changes from pale blue to amethyst, pink, turquoise, dark blue and indigo; and the night is lovelier than the day.

## SECTION II

### *The Basilica of St Mark*

FEW things in the history of art are more remarkable than the revulsion of taste that has taken place with regard to the architecture of Venice. In the early part of the nineteenth century, before Ruskin wrote "The Stones of Venice," an English architect,<sup>1</sup> giving expression to the professional judgment of the age, speaks of "the lumpy form of the Cathedral which surprises you by the extreme ugliness of its exterior; of the lower part built in the degraded Roman we call Norman; of the gouty columns and ill-made capitals, all in bad taste." "The Ducal Palace is even more ugly than anything previously mentioned," vastly inferior to Palladio's churches of S. Giorgio and the Redentore. Disraeli echoes in "Contarini Fleming" the conventional lay praise of Palladio, and writes of the "barbarous although picturesque buildings called the Ducal Palace." Even to-day the stranger fresh from the North with memories of the massive towers and lofty spires of his own architecture will hardly escape a sense of disappointment as he stands before St Mark's. The fabric will seem to lack majesty and to be even less imposing than the Ducal Palace. It must, however, be remembered that the raising of the level of the Piazza has somewhat detracted from the elevation of both the basilica and the Palace. Fynes Moryson notes in his Itinerary (1617) that "there were stairs of old to mount out of the market-place into the church till the waters of the channel increasing they were forced to raise the height of the market-place."

<sup>1</sup> "Letters of an Architect from France, Italy and Greece," by Joseph Woods, 1828, vol. i., p. 256, *et seq.*



A GONDOLIER.

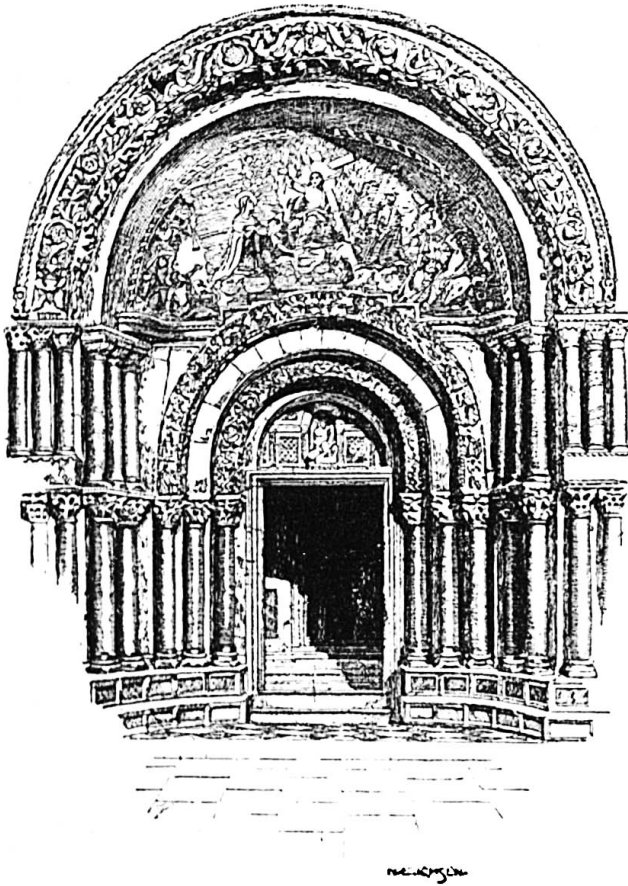
Whether there were any such intention in the minds of the builders is doubtful, but in all communities where the sense of municipal liberty or of secular independence is strong, the dominant civic power is actualised in architecture. In Flemish towns the Hôtel de Ville and not the cathedral is often the more important structure; even so in Venice the subordinate position of the church is marked by the accessory character of the ecclesiastical building, which in its origin indeed was but the official chapel of the Doge, and only became the Cathedral in 1807, when Napoleon transferred the patriarchate from S. Pietro in Castello—itsself a poor thing architecturally—to St Mark's.

Joseph Woods gave a shrewd criticism of Venetian architecture when he characterised it as showing riches and power rather than just proportions. St Mark's was erected by a merchant folk, with all the merchant's love of display of wealth. Their taste was for costly material rather than for nobility and grandeur of design. For centuries the East was ransacked for precious stones to adorn the sanctuary of their patron saint, and the captain of every ship that traded in the Levant was ordered to bring home marbles or fine stones for the builders. St Mark's is a jewelled casket wrought to preserve the Palladium of the Venetian people.

The fabric dates from the early eleventh to the late fourteenth centuries. Its core is of brick, of which most Venetian churches are built, and it is veneered with marble<sup>1</sup> and decorated with mosaic and sculpture. When the eye turns from the whole to examine details, the façade is seen to be composed of two tiers of arches—the lower of seven, the upper of five spans. Of the seven, two form the N. and S. porticos; five the western doors, whose recesses are enriched with rows of columns wanting in unity of

<sup>1</sup> Unhappily most of the old Greek marbles have been replaced by inferior Carrara. It was once proposed by the restorers to varnish and smoke the S. façade, to imitate the rich colours which the mellowing effect of time has given to the original incrustations.

design, but of exceeding richness and variety of material. They are mainly the spoils of Eastern churches, and, if



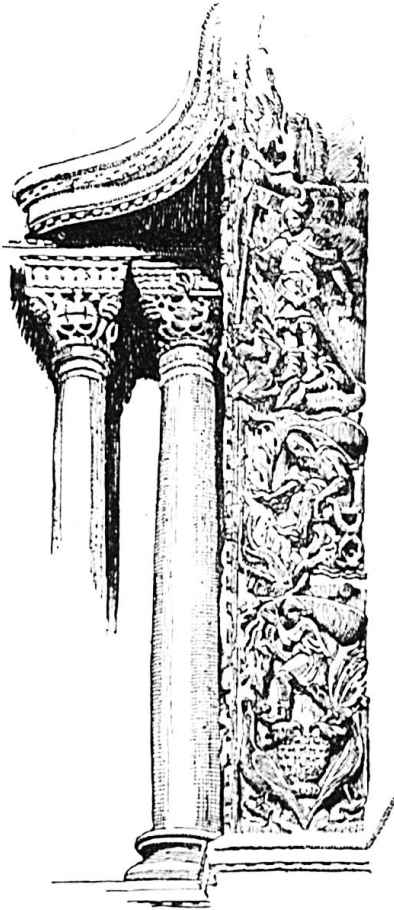
S. MARCO—MAIN PORTAL

closely scrutinised, will be found to be incised with Eastern crosses and curious inscriptions in Greek and oriental characters. The capitals flanking the main portal, with carving



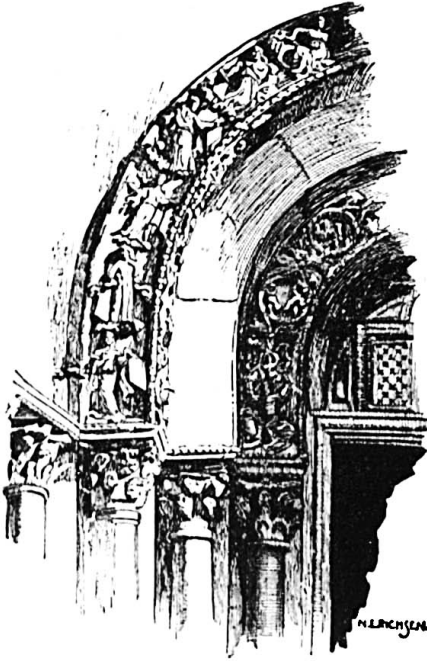
of leaves blown by the wind, are probably from the East, their prototype being at the Church of St Sophia in Thessalonica, built in the later years of Justinian's reign. The main portal is spanned by an inner triple archivolt and an outer main one. The under side of the inner arc of the former, over the relief of St Mark and the Angel, is wrought with sculptures, whose subjects are symbolical, and will be met with again and again in early Venetian decoration: a naked man and woman seated on dragons; a child in the open jaws of a lion; an eagle pecking at a lamb; a lion devouring a stag; camels and other animals, wild and tame, in various groups. On the outer face are similar carvings of boys fighting and robbing birds' nests; men shooting birds with bows and arrows, and hunting wild beasts. The work is exceedingly quaint, and affords a fruitful theme for interpretation.

The sculptures on the under side of the outer arc symbolise the months of the year, with their appropriate celestial signs. May, a seated figure holding a rose and crowned with flowers by two maidens, is most beautiful and original in treatment.



S. MARCO—DETAIL OF ARCHIVOLT

On the outer face of the archivolt are represented the Beatitudes and the Virtues, eight on either side of the key-stone, which symbolises Constancy.



S. MARCO—DETAIL OF MAIN DOOR

On the under surface of the main archivolt are fourteen most beautiful carvings, representing the chief guilds and crafts of Venice. To the L.,<sup>1</sup> at the bottom, is a seated figure with finger on lip, said by Ruskin to represent the rest of old age; by tradition it is the portrait of the architect of the building, of whom the following story is told. When Doge Pietro Orseolo determined to restore the church after the fire of 976, a queer, unknown man, lame in both legs, offered to make St Mark's the most beautiful structure ever erected, if, on completion, his statue were placed in a conspicuous part of the building. His

terms were accepted, but after the work had progressed some time, the stranger incautiously let fall a remark to the effect that the church would have been much more magnificent if certain difficulties had not intervened. Word was sent to the Doge, and the statue was set in its present obscure position.

On either side of the main portal are two doorways, spanned by richly decorated Byzantine arches; that to the L., has the figure of Christ in the keystone and two prophets with scrolls in the spandrels; that to the R. has the key-

<sup>1</sup> Left of the spectator.

stone defaced; in the spandrils to the R. and L. are the archangels Michael and Gabriel. The lateral doorway to the L. has in the lunette a winged figure on horseback and symbols of the Evangelists; on the lintel are some fine Gothic reliefs. The pierced screen-work in the lunette windows should be noted, for in olden times the whole of the window spaces in the domes were thus treated. The corresponding doorway to the R. has in the spandrils, carvings of two archangels, and on the keystone the Virgin and Child.

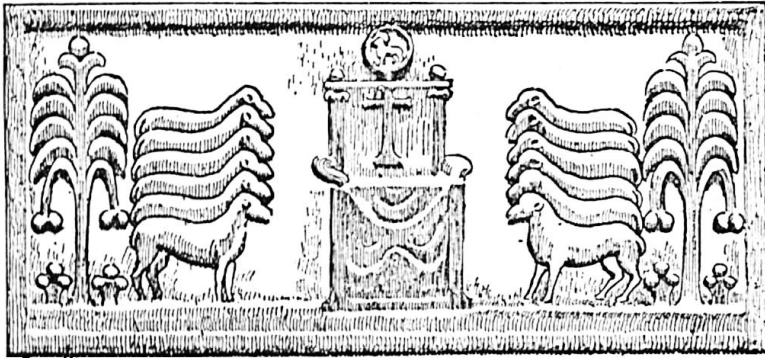
The beautiful lily capitals are at either end of the façade, and support the arches that span the N. and S. porticos.

The late fifteenth-century Gothic additions consist of pinnacles and gables of no structural value. They are seen in Gentile Bellini's picture,<sup>1</sup> dated 1496, of the Procession in St Mark's Square, but are absent in the extant thirteenth-century mosaic on the façade.

The mosaics in the lunettes of the five doorways are, with one exception, poor in craftsmanship, but interesting in their storiation. That of the central portal is a feeble representation of the Last Judgment. Salandri, who executed it in 1836-38, had already been mulcted for bad workmanship. The remaining four tell of the discovery and translation of the body of St Mark. In the fifth porch, to the N., the body of the saint being carried into St Mark's, though largely renewed, is a precious relic of the beautiful thirteenth-century mosaics that covered the front in Gentile Bellini's time, as may be seen from the picture already referred to. The four mosaics in the lunettes on either side of the great window above, represent the Deposition from the Cross, the Descent into Hades, the Resurrection, the Ascension—all seventeenth-century work. Beneath the great window stand the four bronze horses, part of the spoils sent from Constantinople by Enrico Dandolo in 1204. They are said to be Greek work of the fourth century B.C., and to have

<sup>1</sup> No. 567 in the Accademia.

been sent from Rome to the new capital of the Empire by Constantine. They remained in their present position until 1797, when the "gran ladrone," Napoleon I., sent them to Paris to adorn the Arc du Carrousel. In 1815 they were restored to Venice by Francis I. of Austria, as the Latin inscription under the archivolt beneath tells. A magnificent festa was organised when they were raised to their old position in the presence of the Austrian. The Piazza was bright with gorgeous decorations; a superb loggia erected for the Imperial



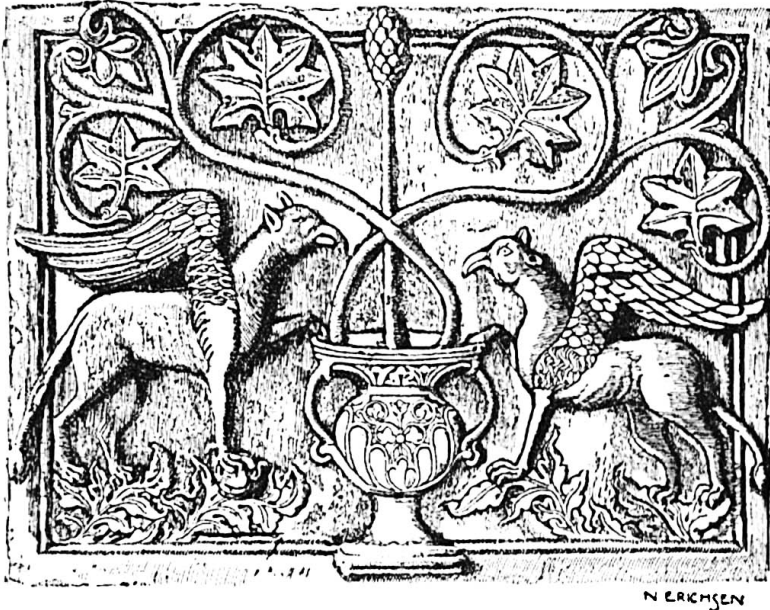
BYZANTINE RELIEF, NORTH SIDE, S. MARCO

family; an amphitheatre for the Venetian nobility. Nothing was wanting—but an audience. The amphitheatre was empty; a few loungers idled about the square. Cannons were fired; the bells rang a double peal; the music played; the horses were drawn up—but not a cheer followed them. The Emperor and his suite had the show to themselves.

In the lunette of the N. portal, which gives on the Piazzetta dei Leoni, with its two double cusped inner arches, is an early relief of the Nativity, a work of great beauty, framed by the vine decoration so beloved of the early sculptors. Among the many Byzantine reliefs with which this façade is jewelled the most perfect is that of the Twelve Apostles, symbolised as sheep, with the Lamb enthroned in the

centre and palm trees on either side. This exquisite carving will be found in the last recess *R.* of the doorway.

The *S.* façade, looking as it does towards the Molo, would in olden times arrest the eye of the traveller as he entered the city. It is most lavishly decorated. The reliefs



BYZANTINE RELIEF FROM SOUTH SIDE, S. MARCO

and marble facings towards the Porta della Carta are some of the finest that remain of the ancient basilica. Their lowly position seems to have preserved them from the restorer's hand. At the angle is a rude Greek relief in porphyry, probably from Acre, of two pairs of armed figures clasping each other. They are said to represent Greek emperors who shared the throne of the East early in the eleventh century. In the foreground stand the two beautifully decorated marble door-posts brought from St Sabbas in

Acra. They should, however, change places to occupy the relative position they formerly held in the church. Below the mosaic of the Virgin and Child in the smaller arch above the gallery two lamps burn nightly in perpetual memory of an act of injustice perpetrated by the Ten in 1611, when an innocent man, Giovanni Grassi, was executed. The short porphyry column at the S.W. corner is the old edict



CAPITALS, ATRIUM, S. MARCO

stone where the official notices and laws of the Republic were proclaimed to the people.

At our feet, as we enter the atrium by the main portal are three slabs of porphyry which mark the legendary, but not the actual, spot where the reconciliation of the Pope and the Emperor Barbarossa took place. The shafts and capitals of the columns in the atrium are among the richest in the basilica. The mosaics, designed to instruct and prepare the catechumen, illustrate Old Testament history, and for their simple beauty will repay perusal.



I TRE PONTI.

In the south cupola are three concentric zones of mosaics which illustrate the six days of Creation, the Institution of the Sabbath, the Fall and the Expulsion from Eden. The number of the day is indicated by a corresponding number of angels standing beside the Creator with hands uplifted in praise. At the institution of the Sabbath the Lord is seen resting from His work with three angels on either side; the seventh kneels receiving the Lord's blessing.<sup>1</sup> There is a quaint portraiture of the Lord clothing Adam and Eve,—Adam most uncomfortable, and Eve looking reproachfully at the ill-fitting garment.

Five mosaics in the three lunettes under the cupola tell the story of Cain and Abel, and under the vaultings between the first cupola and the central vestibule is the story of Noah.

On the W. side of the next vaulting is the story of the Tower of Babel. Below is the tomb of the Dogaressa Felicia, the young wife of Vitale Falier, who, as the inscription tells, was a true servant of God and of the poor, and who spurned luxury (*calcauit luxurium*).

The second cupola contains scenes from the life of Abraham. In the lunette over St Peter, above the inner door, Abraham receives the three angels and entertains them. Behind is Sarah at the door of her tent laughing at the promise that she should bear a son. The third cupola tells the story of Joseph, which is continued on the fourth and fifth cupolas to the N. The sixth cupola deals with the story of Moses. In the recess opposite the lunette to the R. once lay the remains<sup>2</sup> (whence they were taken and brought to England) of Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk—

<sup>1</sup>The traveller who is acquainted with Burne-Jones' Days of Creation will note the influence of these mosaics on the English master's work.

<sup>2</sup>In 1682 the slab of this tomb was accidentally discovered embedded in the wall of the Ducal Palace. In 1810 the French ordered the carving to be defaced, but the mason evaded the command by setting the stone face downwards, and in 1839 Rawdon Brown secured it and sent it to England.



“ Who at Venice gave  
 His body to that pleasant country's earth,  
 And his pure soul unto his captain, Christ,  
 Under whose colours he had fought so long.”

—RICHARD II., iv. 1.

Returning to the main portal of the atrium—in the lunette is St Mark, executed by the brothers Zuccati in 1545 from a cartoon by Titian. Below in seven niches are the Virgin and Child and six Apostles; lower down on either side of the portal, the four Evangelists. In the lunette, R., Raising of Lazarus; lunette over the outer portal, Crucifixion; lunette L., Burial of the Virgin. These, which are among the finest mosaics of the period, formed part of the work that the Zuccati had to answer for in 1563. They were charged by the Bianchini and Bozza with having used the methods of painting and not of true mosaic to produce certain effects. The most famous tribunal ever brought together in the history of art sat to try the case. It was composed of Titian, Paul Veronese, Tintoretto, Jacopo da Pistoia and Schiavone. Although the Zuccati were condemned to remove and replace at their own cost the work that had been gone over with the brush, the honours of the trial rested with them, Titian frankly eulogising their craftsmanship.

No sense of disappointment will be felt at the first view of the interior. The symmetry of the architecture, the gorgeous mosaics, the rich pavement, the precious marbles covering the walls, the manifold variety of the columns, and (if the traveller have the fortune to be present on Easter or St Mark's Day) the dazzling brilliancy of the Pala d'Oro glittering with jewels make a scene of oriental splendour not easily forgotten. In earlier times, when the windows were filled with pierced screen-work of marble, the church was much darker, for, says Moryson, “ the papist churches are commonly dark to cause a religious horror.” Evelyn in 1645 found the interior dark and dismal.

Merely to name the subjects of the 40,000 square feet of mosaics in the interior would weary the reader. We do but indicate the more important and more interesting. The general scheme is designed to illustrate the mysteries of the Christian faith and the story of the patron saint. Over the main entrance is the oldest of the mosaics, probably an eleventh-century work—Christ enthroned between the Virgin and St Mark. In the book held by the Redeemer are the words in Latin, "I am the Door; if any man enter by Me he shall be saved and find pasture." A similar inscription exists to this day over the Porta Basilica which opens into the nave of St Sophia at Constantinople. In the half dome of the apse the colossal seated figure of Christ in the act of blessing meets the eye of the worshipper as he enters the church and walks towards the sanctuary, even as it did in the apse at St Sophia.<sup>1</sup> In the centre of the dome over the high altar is again the figure of Christ, and, above the windows, the Virgin, and the prophets who foretold Christ's coming, bearing scrolls inscribed with their testimony. The pendentives bear symbolic figures of the Four Evangelists, that of the Lion of St Mark with a strangely human face, being designed with admirable force and dignity. Scenes in the life of Christ are portrayed on the vault between this and the central dome; the Passion and Resurrection on the vault between the central and western domes. The great central dome is treated with profound thought and fertile invention, and executed with infinite care. In the apex is the glorified Christ seated on a double rainbow, surrounded by exulting angels. Below are the Virgin, the Apostles and the Evangelists alternating with olive and palm trees. The beautiful figure of the Virgin stands between two angels. In the spaces between the windows are the Virtues and the Beatitudes. They may easily be distinguished by their inscriptions and symbols.

<sup>1</sup> The figure may still be discerned in the great mosque when the light is favourable.

The W. dome treats of the Descent of the Holy Ghost. A white dove standing on a book placed on a throne fills the centre, and from this emblem of the Holy Spirit twelve streams of fire descend upon the figures of the Twelve Apostles circling the dome. The men of every nation to whom they spoke, each in his own tongue, are figured at the Apostles' feet between the windows.

In the dome of the N. transept is figured a Greek cross, in the centre of which are eight Greek letters set in a circle, whose meaning is doubtful. Near this centre, N. and S., is an alpha; E. and W., an omega. On the arms of the cross the Golden Rule is expressed in a curious rhyming Latin paraphrase, beginning on the E. and continuing on the W., N. and S. arms.

The dome of the S. transept bears figures of SS. Leonard, Nicholas, Clement and Blaise. In the pendentives SS. Erasmus, Euphemia, Dorothy and Thecla. While Vincenzo Sebastiani was finishing this last, he fell from the scaffolding and was killed. On the vaultings of the transepts are represented the parables and miracles of Christ. The vaulting to the E., between the S. and the centre domes, has delightfully naïve and dramatic representations of the Temptation and the Entry into Jerusalem. On the western side are beautiful representations of the Last Supper and the Washing of the Disciples' Feet. On the vaultings and the walls of the aisles are stories of the martyrdom of the Apostles.

Modern mosaics illustrating the Book of Revelation, the Last Judgment, Hell and Paradise, cover the vaultings beyond the W. dome and over the W. gallery. They and many other of the mosaics are best seen from the galleries.

On the lower walls of the aisles are repeated the figures of prophets that foretold the coming of Christ bearing the usual scrolls. To the N. are Hosea, Joel, Micah and Jeremiah, with a beautiful representation of the youthful Christ in the centre. S. are Isaiah, David, Solomon and Ezekiel, with the Virgin answering to the figure of Christ.

The story of the patron saint begins on the vaulting of

the N. organ loft over the choir, where scenes in his life and martyrdom are portrayed. They are, however, partly concealed by the organ. These, perhaps the oldest mosaics in the church, were largely restored in 1879 by the Venezia-Murano Company. Opposite, to the S., on the vaulting, is most quaintly told how the body of the saint came to Venice. The designers are very frank in their story of the Transfation of the body. *Furenter*, "it is stolen" from Alexandria.

On the W. wall of the S. transept opposite the Chapel of the Holy Blood is told the story of the miraculous rediscovery of the body in 1094: The Doge, clergy and people, with solemn fast and prayer, implore divine aid, and a round column in the church opens and discloses the saint's body. Tradition, however, says that the body was found in the large pier called St Mark's pillar, to the left of the Chapel of the Holy Blood. An angel's head in full relief is carved above the spot, and a lamp burns below an inlaid cross. The line of cleavage is still seen. Tradition, however, would seem to be at fault in this matter, for when the pillar was recently stripped of the marble facing, the solid core had clearly never been disturbed.

The Baptistry and the Zeno Chapel, entered from the right aisle, originally formed part of the atrium. The mosaics in the Baptistry were executed by the order of Doge Andrea Dandolo (1343-54), but have been partly restored<sup>1</sup> by the Venezia-Murano Company. In the lunette above the altar is the Crucifixion. Weeping angels hover over the cross; L., are the Virgin and St Mark; R., St John the Evangelist and St John the Baptist. At the foot of the cross kneels Doge Andrea Dandolo; at the extreme ends kneel his Grand Chancellor, Riafano Caresini, and a Senator. The table of the altar is formed of a massive block of Egyptian granite from which Christ is said to have preached, brought from the siege of Tyre in 1126. In the centre of the cupola above is Christ enthroned; below is a

<sup>1</sup> "Devastated," says Saccardo.

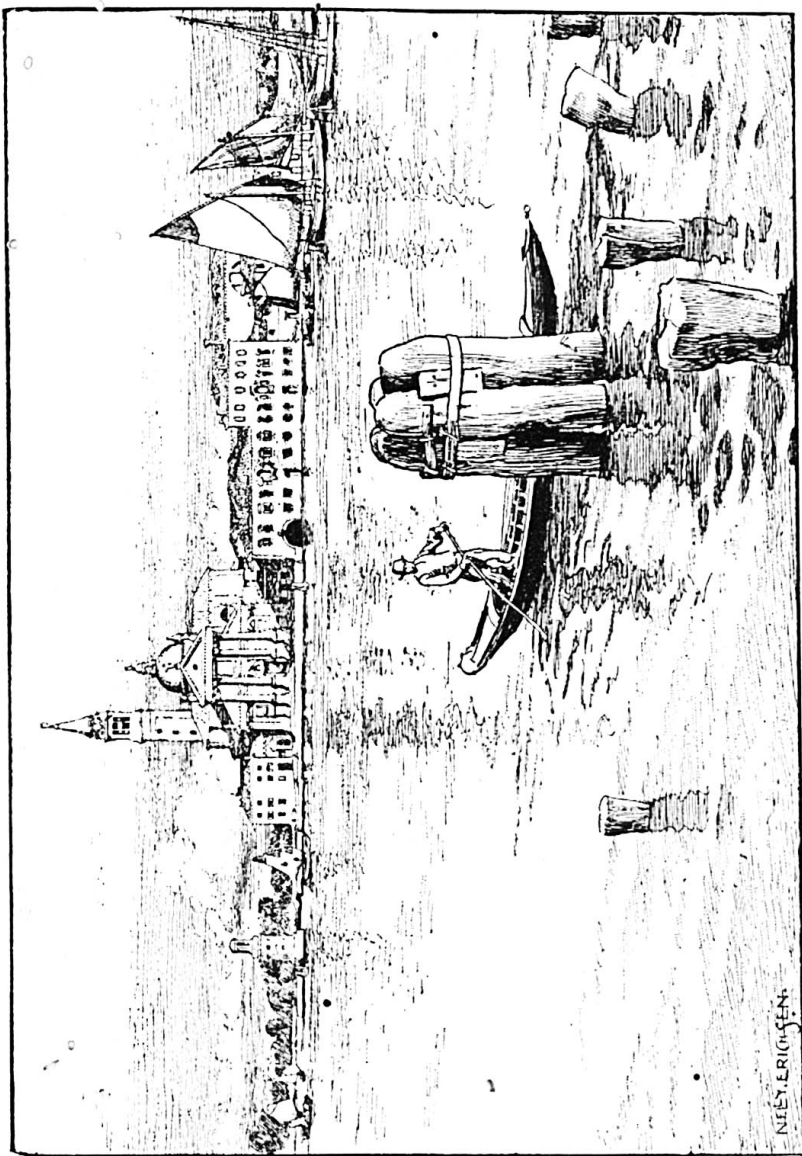
ten-winged angel bearing on his breast the inscription—"Fulness of Wisdom." This is the first of the nine Intelligences circling the cupola, which in mediæval cosmogony ruled over the nine heavenly spheres.

The story of the Baptist's life is told in the lunettes and on the walls. The mosaic of the Burial of the Saint's Body is said by Ruskin to be the most beautiful design of the Baptist's death that he knew in Italy.

In the centre of the cupola over the font is a figure of Christ seated on a double rainbow and holding a scroll on which is inscribed the injunction to the Twelve to go and preach the gospel to all creatures. Beneath, each is seen obeying the command in that country where tradition places his martyrdom. Quaint local costumes are introduced, and converts are being baptised.

Opposite the entrance is the tomb of Andrea Dandolo, the last Doge buried in St Mark's. On the workmanship of this beautiful example of fourteenth-century monumental art Ruskin has lavished ecstatic praise. Beneath the noble, peaceful figure of the Doge are the Virgin and Child, two scenes from the Martyrdom of St John the Baptist and of Andrew, the Doge's patron saint, and an Annunciation. The long Latin epitaph has been attributed to Petrarch.

The vault of the vestibule of the Cappella Zen is decorated with scenes from the life of Christ before His baptism. The tomb in the recess is that of Doge Giovanni Soranzo (1328). The Cappella Zen contains the monument of Cardinal Zeno, executed at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The altar is dedicated to the Virgin of the Slipper, whose figure in bronze has a gilded shoe, in perpetual memory of the miraculous alchemy by which her slipper, given to a poor votary, was changed to gold. The Zeno tomb is a fine Renaissance work in bronze which, together with the altar, was designed by the Lombardi and Aless. Leopardi (p. 191). The walls of the chapel are decorated with the history of St Mark.



S. GIORGIO MAGGIORE

NIETZSCHER

In the little chapel of the Madonna dei Mascoli at the W. angle of the N. transept, where of old a guild of men used to assemble, are some fine fifteenth-century mosaics by Michele Giambono. They are unhappily injured by restoration, but in the main the early Renaissance feeling has been preserved and the more natural modelling of the figures and fuller architectural detail form a pleasing contrast to the stiff and sometimes hard design of the Byzantine workmen.

East of this is the richly decorated chapel of St Isidore founded by the same Doge and scholar who decorated the Baptistery. The work was not, however, completed until 1355 under Dom. Gradenigo. The inscription over the altar tells that the body of the Blessed Isidore was brought from Chios in 1125 by Doge Dom. Michiel and now rests in the tomb below. The sculptured figure of the saint and the reliefs to left and right representing his martyrdom are fine work. The fourteenth-century mosaics so faithfully wrought by the artists of that great epoch have needed but slight repair and remain practically as they left them. Over the altar is Christ seated between S. Mark and Isidore, and balancing this at the opposite end are the Virgin and Child, the Baptist and St Nicholas. The legend of the saint is illustrated on the walls. In this chapel we are standing within part of the actual fabric of the old church of St Theodore. When the S. wall of the chapel was peeled in 1832 it was found to be blackened by exposure to the weather and pierced by a window with an iron grille.

The group of worshippers ever before the altar to the left as the visitor leaves this chapel will tell him that he is approaching the shrine of the Virgin. Under a canopy is the miraculous Nicopeian icon of the Virgin which was captured from Murzuphles and formed part of the spoil of Constantinople. Doge Dandolo sent it to Venice in a specially appointed ship, and in 1618 the present altar was raised by Doge Giov. Bembo. The image (only exposed on Saturdays) was

traditionally painted by St. Luke. It is lavishly decorated with precious stones and surrounded by ex-votos.

Passing the altar of St Paul, bearing a statue of the saint and a fine relief of the scene of his blindness, the chapel of St Peter is reached. In front is a screen with statues of the Virgin and Child and four women saints, the Massegne. In the apse of this chapel is the entrance to the Sacristy, one of the most beautiful chambers in Europe. The magnificent mosaic ceiling designed by Titian and wrought with perfect art; the rich marble decorations; the symmetry and proportion of the architecture; the chastened glow of colour will not fail to impress the spectator.

Beyond the altar of St Paul is the great N. pulpit. It is one of the finest architectural features in the church and rich in historical memories. Here Enrico Dandolo and other great Doges and prelates addressed the people in national crises. Another pulpit smaller and simpler in style stands to the S. of the choir screen, and an altar to St James balances that to St Paul on the N. On the architrave of the screen stand the crucifix, statues of the Virgin, St Mark and the Twelve Apostles by the Massegne, signed and dated 1394-97. On either side of the choir are three reliefs in bronze by Sansovino. The great bronze-doors by the same master lead from the L. of the choir to the Sacristy. The canopy of the high altar is borne by four marble columns with reliefs (p. 187). The rude timeworn figures tell the story of the life of the Virgin on the N.E. pillar and the life of Christ on the remaining pillars, reading N.W., S.E. and S.W.

The gorgeous Pala d' Oro is exposed to view on Easter Eve and Day, and St Mark's Eve and Day. It may be seen on other days between twelve and two on payment of 50 centesimi. This magnificent example of the goldsmith's art was made to the order of Ordelafo Falier by Byzantine craftsmen at Constantinople in 1105. It was added to and restored by Gothic artists under Pietro Ziani in 1209, and under Andrea



Dandolo in 1345. The gold, estimated to weigh thirty, the silver three hundred pounds, is set with some 1200 pearls and a like number of precious stones. Most of the jewels were, however, looted by the French in 1797 and are replaced by inferior modern stones, which may be detected by the fact that they are cut in facets. The upper compartment has in the centre St Michael surrounded by sixteen medallions of the doctors of the Church. To the L. are three panels: The Feast of Palms, Descent into Limbo, Crucifixion; to the R., other three, the Ascension, Pentecost, Death of the Virgin. The lower and larger compartment is framed on three sides by twenty-seven small panels whose subjects are taken from the lives of St Mark, Christ and the Virgin. In the middle is a large panel with the figure of the seated Christ and four smaller figures of the Evangelists; above are two archangels and two cherubim. On each side of the large panel are two sets of six medallions, the upper and smaller of archangels, the lower and larger of the Apostles. Beneath the figure of Christ in the large panel are three plaques: the centre contains the figure of the Virgin; L. of her is a crowned figure, which a Latin inscription tells is that of Doge Ordelafo Falier; R. of the Virgin is a crowned figure with a Greek inscription stating it to be the Empress Irene. If, however, the observer will scrutinise the figure of the Doge it will be seen that his head has been substituted for that of the Empress's consort, John Comnenus. On each side of these three central figures are inscriptions which give the history of the Pala d'Oro and six prophets bearing scrolls. The technique of the gold *cloisonné* enamels is admirable. They are glorious in colour, partly translucent, and allow the backing of fine gold to shine through.

Behind the high altar is the altar of the Holy Cross, adorned with six columns of precious marble. The two spiral, semi-transparent ones were reputed to come from Solomon's Temple. The chapel to the S. of the high altar

is dedicated to St Clement. Beneath the cornice whence springs the vaulting of the apse is a stern minatory inscription in Latin that met the eye of the Doge, as he entered from the Ducal Palace through an ante-room opening on this chapel. It is now but dimly seen, and runs thus: *Love justice, give all men their rights: let the poor and the widow, the ward and the orphan, O Doge, hope for a guardian in thee. Be compassionate to all: let not fear nor hate nor love nor gold betray thee. Thou shalt perish as a flower: dust shalt thou become, and, as thy deeds have been, so after death thy reward shall be.*

In the S. transept, answering to the Lady Chapel, is the chapel of the Holy Blood, formerly dedicated to St Leonard.

The old and new crypts open to the public on St Mark's Day, and at other times on payment of 50 centesimi, are of great interest. In the centre of the new crypt, that of Contarini's church, is the empty tomb, reaching to the roof, where lay St Mark's body from 1094 until 1811, when it was removed to the high altar where it now remains. Three steps, topped by a slab of stone worn by pilgrims' feet, lead to a semi-circular cell with a small window once filled with pierced stone-work. The ancient capitals of the columns of this crypt are of great beauty. The older crypt with its rude brick vaulting that formed part of the ninth-century basilica of Giov. Participazio, was drained and cleared of rubbish, as the inscription tells, in 1890.

The chief object of interest in the Treasury, entered at the W. angle of the S. transept, is the so-called chair of St Mark, wrought from a block of Cipollino marble, said to have been sent to Aquileia from Alexandria by the Empress Helena and to have been carried thence with the other relics to Grado, at the time of the Lombard invasion. Some beautiful book-covers from St Sofia; a number of Byzantine chalices made of precious stones; two fine candelabri attributed to Cellini; a ring used at the Wedding of the

Adriatic, are among the exhibits. The Treasury was looted at the same time as the Pala d'Oro by the French. The room itself, outside the fabric of the church, is of interest inasmuch as it originally formed part of the tower of the old Ducal Palace. The body of St Mark is said to have lain there from 829 until 832, when the church was ready to receive it.

Before we quit the interior, the old rich mosaic pavement with its quaint and beautiful Byzantine designs is worth notice. The uneven, wavy form is due, not to any intent of imitating the waves of the sea, but to the fact that the pavement is supported by the crypt and has settled into hollows corresponding to the cells of the vaulting which, being filled with loose material, are less rigid than the crown where no settlement has taken place.

### SECTION III

#### *The Ducal Palace*

To turn from the fair temple of the Christian faith in Venice, warm with the affection and the presence of her people, to the empty splendour of the Palace where her secular princes sat in state, is to turn from life to death. If a patrician of the great days were to revive and enter St Mark's he would find the same hierarchy, the same ritual, the same prayers and praise uttered in the same language to the God he knew. But if he sought to enter the Ducal Palace, the servant of a then petty dynasty would demand a silver coin before he were permitted to ascend the Golden Staircase. There, on steps once trod by those alone whose names were inscribed in the Book of Gold, he would meet a strange company. He would find the great palace of Venice a museum; her millennial power a memory; and the gorgeous halls that once echoed to the voices of the masters of land