

SECTION IV

The Accademia

AFTER the fall of the Venetian Republic the French government expropriated a group of buildings belonging to the church, monastery and guild of S. Maria della Carità, and there housed the collection of paintings selected from the public offices, the suppressed religious orders, guilds and churches of Venice, by their commissioner, Peter Edwards, who had formerly been chief picture restorer to the Republic. Some conception may be formed, after visiting the Ducal Palace and the magnificent collection treasured in these rooms, of the enormous wealth of paintings existing in the city in the latter half of the eighteenth century; for the commission then appointed to overhaul the artistic possessions of the government decided to restore only the best and allowed the remainder to rot. The Guild of Our Lady of Charity, the earliest of the six greater *Scuole*¹ of Venice, was founded in 1260 to ransom Christian captives from the Moors and other pirates. Over the portal of the outer cloister are three early reliefs in stone, St Leonard, patron of captives and slaves; the Virgin and Child with kneeling guildsmen; and St Christopher. In the inner court, entered from the corridor of the Istituto delle Belle Arti, may be seen Palladio's unfinished cloisters, one of the most beautiful examples of the use of brick in N. Italy. Of the old rooms of the guild two only remain, Room XX., the former Guest Chamber, and Room I. Both have magnificent fifteenth-century ceilings; that of the latter is by Giampietro of Vicenza, a famous wood-carver whose figures of eight-winged cherubs have been ingeniously but erroneously interpreted as a rebus on the name of a supposed brother,

¹ (1) The Carità, (2) S. Giovanni Evangelista, (3) The Misericordia, (4) S. Marco, (5) S. Rocco, (6) S. Teodoro.

Cherubino Aliotto (eight-winged), who was believed to have paid for the decoration of the ceiling.

We enter Room I., which is filled with admirable examples of the work of the earliest Venetian masters, Jacobello del Fiore, Giambono, Lorenzo Veneziano, Simone da Cusighe, Andrea and Quirizio da Murano, all dominated by Byzantine models, and giving small promise of the future glories of the Vivarini and Bellini schools.

Before entering Room II. the eye will be arrested by Titian's famous Assumption, No. 40. A nearer view of this grandiose painting will serve to impress the beholder with the animation and force of the master's new style and the subtle artifice by which he attracts the eye of the spectator to the ascending Virgin, to whom the whole composition yearns. This great altar-piece created a vast sensation when exposed at the Frari, pregnant as it was with the future development of the grand school of Venetian painting:—its masterly group of a large and complicated subject, its breadth of treatment and habit of massing the warmer and mellower colours of the palette on the canvas. It must be remembered, however, that the features of the Virgin and the picture generally have been coarsened by restoration, for, unhappily, most of the old paintings which have come down to us have been restored more than once, more than twice, more than thrice, and the traveller will need to make allowances for the consequent debasement of the original creation in this and many other works by the old masters. In this room of masterpieces we are enabled, by the juxtaposition of three altar-pieces (38, by Giov. Bellini; 36, by Cima; 37, by Veronese) to compare the treatment of the same subject, the Virgin and Child and Saints, by three great masters. 41, The Death of Abel, by Tintoretto, is an admired work, powerful but sombre. It is considered by Ruskin to be one of the most wonderful works in the gallery and superior in many respects to 42, The Miracle of St Mark, the most popular of the master's paintings (p. 209). A Christian

slave is tortured and ordered to be executed for his devotion to St Mark, who descends from heaven like lightning to rescue him. The executioner exhibits the broken hammer! A work of amazing science and originality which so perplexed the members of the guild¹ for whom it was executed and gave rise to so many discussions, that the impatient artist fetched it away and kept it in his atelier until it was better appreciated. 43, Adam and Eve, is an early work by the master. 44, Carpaccio, Presentation in the Temple, is, in Ruskin's estimation, the best picture in the Accademia. The painter wrought the work in emulation of his master's altar-piece (No. 38). All the Bellini features are here—the mosaic half dome, the Renaissance decoration, the sweet boy musicians with instruments almost too big for them to handle. The two paintings adorned the same church.

We pass Room III., which contains a miscellaneous collection of paintings of various Italian schools, and Room IV. (drawings by Italian masters), and reach Room V., where the dominant genius of the Bellini is manifested in the works of their contemporaries with which the room is hung. It contains, 69, The Agony in the Garden, the finest of Basaiti's paintings in Venice, and some excellent examples of Bissolo's warm colour and dignified figures. 76. The Supper at Emmaus, is a remarkable and unique work by Marco Marziale. Two powerfully wrought figures seated at the table betray the alien influence of Dürer over this painter. 82, The Virgin and Child enthroned between SS. Jerome, Benedict, Mary Magdalene and Giustina, is Benedetto Diana's last work. We pass to one of Bissolo's best productions, 79, Christ presenting the Crown of Thorns to St Catherine of Siena, and showing the crown of gold, her portion in heaven. Near 97, a

¹ Four pictures were painted for the Guild of St Mark. Two, the Carrying of the Body of St Mark from Alexandria, and St Mark saving a Saracen, are in the Royal Palace of Venice; the fourth is in the Brera at Milan.

typical plague picture by Mansueti, are two fine paintings by Lazzaro Sebastiani. 104, St Anthony of Padua enshrined in a tree, beneath which are St Bonaventura and another Franciscan saint, has much puzzled the critics. According to tradition St Anthony composed his last sermons while sitting on the branches of a tree. It is, moreover, an old custom to place shrines, with figures of saints, in the trees by the wayside in Italy. We have seen many such in the hill country of Venetia.

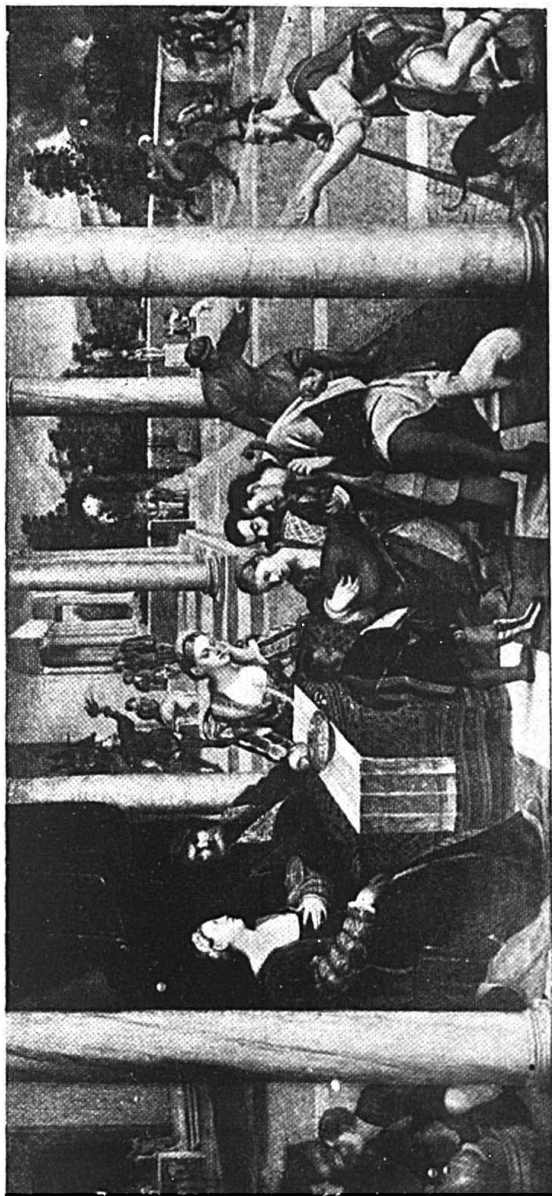
We enter Room VI., which contains a collection of Dutch pictures of no great merit, and cross to Room VII., devoted mainly to the Friulian painters. The chief attraction of this room is, however, 147, a magnificent *Sacra Conversazione* by Palma Vecchio. It is a late work by the master, and was probably left unfinished at his death.

At the farther end is the entrance to Room VIII., hung with Flemish paintings. Turning L. we ascend the steps which lead from Room V. to Room IX., which glows with the compositions of the sixteenth-century masters Veronese and Tintoretto. 203 is *The Supper in the House of Levi* (p. 211). Under a spacious Corinthian portico Christ is seated between St John and St Peter. The whole scene is dominated by the princely magnificence of the repast. The details objected to by the Inquisitor are untouched; Peter is still carving the lamb, and between two columns on the L. is the fellow picking his teeth with a fork. Four scenes from the story of S. Cristina, and the Virgin of the Rosary are characteristic paintings by the same master. 210, *The Virgin and Child with SS. Mark, Sebastian and Theodore*, and three officers of the Treasury, followed by their servants, was one of Ruskin's favourite Tintoretto's. 213, *The Crucifixion*, by Tintoretto, is a sombre dramatic representation of the scene envisaged in his most naturalistic manner another of Ruskin's favourites; he believed that neither the Miracle of St Mark nor the great Crucifixion in S. Rocco cost the artist more pains than this comparatively small work. 214,

by Il Moro, is an interesting picture from the Admiralty ; it is divided into two parts, (1) St Mark and three functionaries who are recruiting for the navy ; (2) view of the Molo chief quay of Venice, the Piazzetta and the Ducal Palace ; gondolas and galleys are seen on the canal. 217, Tintoretto's Descent from the Cross, is another fine composition, almost Spanish in its gloom. Numerous portraits on the end walls are by the same master. R. of the door is an interesting picture, 243, Virgin and Child and four magistrates of the Salt Office in adoration. It was the custom of the chief civil servants of the Republic to leave as a souvenir of their term of office a picture of their patron saint with their escutcheon and initials painted on it. Most of the Bonifazios in Room X. are such, and came from various public offices ; Tintoretto, in this picture, was the first to represent actual portraits. 255, a Crucifixion by Veronese, is painted in the frankly naturalistic style of the later school of Venice. 260, an Annunciation, is in the master's most spacious and stately manner.

Room X. is largely held by the creations of Bonifazio and his pupils. 281, The Adoration of the Magi, is a beautiful work, painted with great care, by the master, for the Ten. On the opposite wall, 319, The Slaughter of the Innocents is the companion picture. Bonifazio's receipt, dated 1545, for ten ducats on account of these two pictures still exists among the archives of the Ten. They were hung in their Financial Secretary's office in the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi. 291, The Rich Man's Feast (p. 207). For depth of feeling, sumptuous colour, variety and strength of characterisation, one of the most noteworthy creations of Venetian art. Dives¹ is seated in a Venetian country-house at table between two courtesans, one of whom he clasps by the hand. She, with a far-away look, turns aside listening to a woman playing on the lute, accompanied by a man

¹ Said in the official catalogue to represent Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn respectively!



ACCADEMIA—THE RICH MAN'S FEAST

By BONIFAZIO

with the bass viol. All the accessories of a rich man's establishment are present. Hawks are being trained, horses exercised. To the R., Lazarus is seen, a dog licking his sores, and in the background lurid flames forbode impending doom. 284, Christ Enthroned, is a richly coloured picture formerly placed in the chief office of the Customs. On the top line are twelve groups of saints,¹ painted in the Bonifazio atelier, and formerly assigned to Bonifazio III. 318, St Mark, skied among them, is however a finer work, probably by the master's hand. On the screen are The Judgment of Solomon, another masterly composition, painted in 1533 for the Salt Office, in the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi, and some portraits by Pordenone. 400, a Deposition, is Titian's last work, a pathetic canvas. An inscription tells that what Titian left unfinished, Palma Giovane completed, and dedicated to God. The Virgin bears the dead Saviour on her knees. To the R. kneels St Joseph of Arimathea; to the L., in an attitude of poignant grief, is St Mary Magdalen. 320, Paris Bordone: scene from the legend of St Mark and the Fisherman (p. 121). The Doge, Bartolomeo Gradenigo, is represented enthroned in the midst of the Council, bending forward to receive the ring. 316 is Pordenone's masterpiece. The patriarch, S. Lorenzo Giustiniani, with Dantesque features, stands under a Renaissance chapel. Before him kneels S. Francis, behind whom is St Augustine and an acolyte. R., S. John the Baptist, with the muscular development of an athlete, behind whom is St Bernardine of Siena and a kneeling monk.

We turn by the Loggia Palladiana, hung with late Dutch and Flemish paintings, copies and school pictures of minor interest, and enter Room XI. on the R., which is given to some

¹ 283, SS. Mark and Vincent, is interesting from the fact that the latter saint was originally the beardless St Lawrence, which was painted over by Tintoretto to represent a full-bearded magistrate, and became St Vincent. The original painting was by Michele Parrhasio, a wealthy dilettante working in Bonifazio's atelier, who used to treat his critics to sweets and wine.

characteristic landscapes, scenes of peasant life and portraits by the Bassani. Rooms XII. and XIII. display work by artists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including some interesting genre pictures by Pietro Longhi. Room XIV. contains some Tiepolos, among them a fine ceiling painting, No. 462, the Invention of the Cross, three small Guardis, 704, 705, 706, two Canalettos, 463 and 494, and other works of minor interest. In Corridor I.¹ is the much debated, No. 516, The Tempest calmed by SS. Mark, George and Nicholas, illustrating the story of the Fisherman and St Mark.

We now turn to Room XV., where are exhibited the paintings illustrating the miracles of the Holy Cross which Gentile Bellini and his pupils were commissioned to execute for the decoration of the Hall of the Guild of S. Giovanni Evangelista about 1490. The room is specially constructed to display these important pictures to the best advantage. 561 by Lazzaro Sebastiani. A crusader, Filippo de' Massari, on his return from Jerusalem offers a fragment of the Holy Cross to the brethren of the Guild. 562 by Mansueti. The daughter of one Benvenuto da S. Polo is healed on touching three candles sanctified by contact with the relic. The scene is the interior of an old Venetian palace with costumes of the period. 563 by Gentile Bellini. Pietro de' Ludovici, sick of a fever, is healed by means of a candle as in the former miracle. We are here in the chapel of the guild with the brethren in their black and crimson robes in the foreground. 564 by Mansueti. The relic is brought over the wooden bridge opposite St Lio to accompany the remains of a brother who during his life had scoffed at its power. The procession which is to accompany the body to its last resting-place is thrown into confusion by the Cross containing the relic refusing to advance into the church where the body lies. The scene is most animated. Spectators look from the windows, from the housetops and from

¹ Now promoted to Room X.

the streets. The gondola of the period is represented. The artist himself stands at the foot of the bridge to the left, holding a paper inscribed with his name, Giovanni Mansueti the Venetian, disciple of Bellini. 565, attributed to Benedetto Diaña, is said to portray the healing by the relic of a child fallen from the top of the stairs. Neither the quality of the work nor the subject seems convincing. The woman seems to have slipped on the pavement with her child. If genuine it can be no more than a fragment of a larger composition referred to by the older writers as containing elaborate architectural details and groups of people similar to the other paintings of this series. 566 by Carpaccio. Casting out of a devil by the Patriarch Francesco Querini. The Grand Canal is crowded with gondolas. The old wooden Rialto drawbridge with its bascules and levers spans the canal. Above, L., the patriarch is seen in a loggia of his palace at S. Silvestro casting forth the evil spirit by holding out the relic. A most interesting presentation of old Venetian architecture. Two youths in the foreground, with their backs to the spectator, one of whom has a mermaid embroidered on his hood, are in Calza costume. 567 by Gentile Bellini, Procession in the Piazza. A merchant of Brescia whose son lay dying made a vow to the relic as the procession passed and his son was saved. In the ducal procession to the R. the Doge is seen under the State umbrella with the Procurators of St Mark, chamberlains and senators and trumpeters. This is one of the most precious pictorial documents for the aspect of the Piazza in 1496. The thirteenth-century mosaics of St Mark's are in their place; the Procuratie Vecchie are there but no Clock Tower; houses abut on the Campanile. The Porta della Carta and the façade of St Mark's are richly gilded. According to Vasari, Gentile surpassed himself in the next painting (568), which firmly established his reputation. During a procession to the church of St Lorenzo the reliquary falls from a bridge

into the canal. Several persons plunge in to save it. To none but the warden of the guild, Andrea Vendramin, was it vouchsafed to recover the shrine. A vivid representation of a piece of old Venice. At the head of the Venetian ladies, kneeling to the L., is Catherine Cornaro, Queen of Cyprus, wearing her crown. This picture, and No. 567, the artist tells us, were painted in pious affection for the Holy Cross. 570, a faded work by the same artist, S. Lorenzo Giustiniani, with two kneeling canons and angels bearing his crook and mitre. In the apse are two important works painted by Mansueti for the Guild of St Mark. 569, St Mark heals the cobbler Anianus, wounded by his awl, a favourite legend; and 571, St Mark preaching at Alexandria.

Room XVI. contains Carpaccio's St Ursula series, painted 1490-95, for the Guild of St Ursula. The legend, familiar to those who have studied the paintings of Carpaccio's contemporary, Memling, on the shrine of St Ursula at Bruges, may be briefly summarised. Maurus, the Christian king of Brittany, had a daughter named Ursula (Little Bear), because she came into the world wrapt in a hairy mantle. The pagan king of England, Agrippinus, hearing of her wisdom, virtue and beauty, sent ambassadors to ask the maiden's hand for his son Conon. King Maurus, knowing his daughter's vow of perpetual chastity and yet fearing to anger a powerful neighbour by refusal, was in great distress. Just before dawn¹ of the next day, while Ursula lay in her chamber, the angel of the Lord appeared to her in a dream and bade her go to her father, and wisdom would be given her to counsel him aright. When day was fully come she went to his chamber and enumerated to the anxious king the conditions on which the suit would be accepted: For companions she required ten virgins of noblest blood, each with one thousand virgin attendants, herself another thousand virgins; they must be allowed to make a pilgrimage to Rome; the prince and his court to be baptised.

¹ *Quando del ver si sogna* (when dreams are true).—INFERNO, xxvi. 7.

The envoys returned to England bearing such reports of the princess's beauty that Conon was fired with a desire to marry her, and the conditions were granted. Ursula and her maidens, Conon and his suite, set sail in eleven ships for Rome. Being arrived, the Pope and his clergy came forth to bless them. When they had performed their vows the pilgrims returned accompanied by the Pope and reach Cologne, then besieged by the Huns, who straightway massacred the pilgrims, the Pope and his clergy—all except Ursula, whose beauty destined her to be the bride of the king of the Huns. But she, defying his power, aroused his fury; he ordered her to be put to death.

The artist has illustrated this story in his most charming and dramatic manner, though, as the dates prove, no consistent plan of the series was drawn up. The most popular of the paintings is No. 578. Ursula is sleeping in her chamber and an angel, bearing in his right hand a palm-branch, the sign of martyrdom, appears to her in a vision. The early light of dawn streams through the open door. On the tassel of her pillow is inscribed, *Infantia*. Every detail in this virgin sanctuary, the little crown at the foot of the bed, the clogs placed side by side, the tidy over her head, the shrine and receptacle for holy water against the wall, betokens maidenly care and piety. The charm of these pictures is perennial. Zanetti¹ used to conceal himself in the hall where they were placed to watch the effect they produced on the ordinary spectator.

Room XVII. is chiefly taken up with pictures by the Vivarini and by Cima. 618 and 619, The Baptist and St Matthew, and 593, St Clare, are all fine examples of Alvisio Vivarini's work; the last is one of his greatest achievements, a living portrait, full of character. 588, Mantegna's St George and the Dragon, is a precious possession, one of the great Paduan master's most careful works, painted about 1460. 584 and 585, SS. Mary Magdalen and Barbara, are

¹ The eminent critic and scholar, 1766-78.

late works (1490) by Bartolomeo Vivarini. 589, Christ bound to the Column, and 590, The Virgin in Meditation, have been ascribed to Antonello da Messina, but their genuineness is doubtful. Mr Berenson admits the former in his index to the works of the Venetian painters; the official catalogue attributes it to Pietro da Messina, and 590 to an unknown copyist working from an original at Munich. We now come to one of the most delightful and graceful compositions in this room, 600, a Marriage of St Catherine, by the Lombard master Boccaccino: before the Virgin and Child kneel St Peter and the Baptist; to the L. St Catherine holds forth her hand to receive the ring; to the R. stands the beautiful figure of St Rose; to the R. of the charming landscape background are portrayed the Wise Men and the Flight into Egypt. Then follow some guild pictures by Cima. 604, the last of the master's work in this room, is an early painting of much beauty, The Deposition with the Marys and Nicodemus.

Room XVIII., at the farther end, is the new Bellini room in which are collected the Bellinis formerly hung in XVII. This little treasury includes, 582, a unique example of Jacopo's work, The Virgin and Child. 596, Giovanni's famous Virgin of the Trees, has recently been peeled and some strata of repainting removed; it is dated 1487, but this date has been questioned by Morelli and other critics who believe it to be a maturer work painted about 1504. 610, The Virgin and Child between SS. George and Paul, is another popular work by the master; both are admirable for warmth of colour, and dignity and beauty of form. 613, The Virgin and Child between SS. Catherine and Mary Magdalen, is one of the most characteristic of Giovanni's productions; less virile perhaps than 610, but rich and warm in colour and gentle in feeling. We now turn to 595, a remarkable series of panels painted for a *cassone* or wedding chest; charming allegories on which the painter has lavished all his skill. Their interpretation still awaits an *Œdipus*, but

the following suggestions by Ruskin will help the visitor: 1, Fortitude quitting the effeminate Bacchus; 2, Domestic Love, —the world in Venus' hand becoming the colour of heaven; 3, Fortune as Opportunity distinguished from the greater and sacred Fortune appointed by Heaven; 4, Truth; 5, Lust.¹

Room XIX. contains a small collection of Muranese and Paduan school paintings, and others of no great importance. We descend to Room XX., originally the guest-chamber of the brotherhood. The carved and gilded ceiling, representing Christ in the act of blessing, and the four Evangelists, each in his study, is one of the most beautiful schemes of decoration in Venice. It was here that Titian, between 1534 and 1538, painted the Presentation, now restored to its original place. The high-priest stands before the temple at the top of a grand staircase to receive the little maid who seems somewhat too conscious of her pretty blue frock. A group of richly attired Venetian ladies and gentlemen look on. At the foot of the stairway sits an old, coarse-featured peasant woman with a basket of eggs; the mountains of Cadore are in the background. According to Ruskin, the most stupid and uninteresting work ever painted by the artist. 625. Giov. d'Alemanò and Ant. da Murano, *Virgin and Child enthroned*, and four Latin fathers of the Church, was also executed for the very wall space it now covers. It is obviously much repainted. On a screen is 245, a portrait of Jacopo Soranzo by Titian. Above, on a swing panel, is 316, *St John the Baptist*, painted when the master had passed his eightieth year.

SECTION V

The Grand Canal and S. Giorgio Maggiore

SECOND only in architectural interest to St Mark's and the Ducal Palace are the patrician mansions that line the chief artery of Venice, known to Venetians as the Canalazzo. No

¹ More probably Vice or Slander