

CHAPTER II

St Mark the Patron of Venice—The Brides of St Mark— Conquest of Dalmatia—Limitation of the Doge's Power

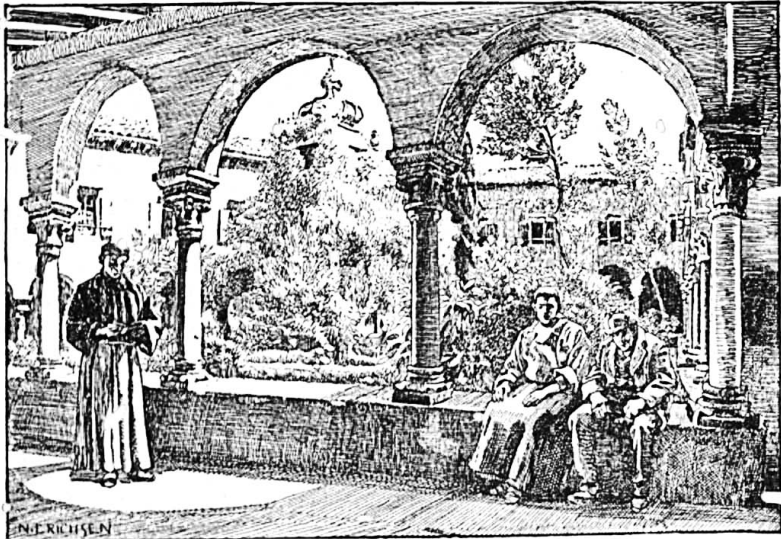
"But I must tellen verillie
Of St Marke's . . .
. . . holy shrine
Exalt amid the tapers' shine
At Venice."

—*Scott.*

AN immediate outburst of creative energy was the result of the victory. Angelo Participazio was chosen Doge and according to precedent associated his son with him. He set himself to enlarge, fortify and embellish Rialto. The ravaged settlements of the Chioggie, Brondolo, Pelestrina and Albiola were rebuilt, and a new Heraclea, called *Città Nuova*, rose on the ruins of the old capital. Dykes were built, rivers diverted and canals bridged. A ducal palace was erected near the Church of St Theodore, and a church to S. Pietro at Olivolo. The Chapel and Convent of S. Zaccaria were founded and endowed by the Doge to contain the body of S. Zaccaria, father of the Baptist, and other relics given to the Venetians by Leo the Eastern Emperor.

There was an old tradition among the early settlers at Rialto that St Mark on his way from Alexandria to preach the Faith in Aquileia was caught in a violent storm and forced to land on one of the Rialtine islands where now stands the Church of S. Francesco della Vigna. As he stepped forth, from his bark an angel saluted him saying: "*Pace a te Marco Evangelista mio*" (Peace to thee Mark my Evangelist), and announced that one day his body should find a resting-place

and veneration at Rialto. Traditions like prophecies have a way of bringing their own fulfilment, and in the brief reign of Angelo's son Giustiniani (827-829) some Venetians trading with the infidels in defiance of imperial prohibition succeeded in stealing the Evangelist's body and carrying it to Venice.



CLOISTER OF S. FRANCESCO DELLA VIGNA

The story of "how the precious body of Monsignor S. Marco came to Venice" is thus told by Da Canale. "Now at this time there was a ship of the Venetians at Alexandria on which were three valiant men. The one called Messer Rustico of Torcello, the other Messer Buono of Malamocco, the third Messer Stauracio; which three valiant men had great hope and devotion to bring the body of S. Marco to Venice, and they so got round (*s'en alerent tant autour*) the guardian of the body that having won his friendship they said to him, Messer, if thou wilt come with us to Venice and bear away the body of Monsignor S. Marco thou shalt

become a rich man. And when he, who was called Theodore, heard this he answered: 'Sirs, hold your peace, say not so, that may not be in any wise, for the pagans hold it more precious than aught else in the world, and if they espied us would surely cut off our heads. Then said they, wait until the blessed Evangelist command thee. And it came to pass that there entered into the heart of this worthy guardian a desire to bear away the body, and he came back to them saying: 'Sirs, how can we take away Monsignor S. Marco without the knowledge of any man? And one answered: Right wisely will we do it. And they went hastily by night to the sepulchre where the body was and put it in a basket and covered it with cabbages and swine's flesh, and they took another body, laid it in the tomb in the very same cloth from which the body of Monsignor S. Marco had been taken and sealed the tomb as it was before. And the valiant men bore the body to the ship in that same basket as I have told of, and for dread of the pagans slung it to a mast of their ship. What shall I tell you? At that very moment when they opened the tomb so sweet and so great an odour spread through the midst of the city that all the spiceries in Alexandria could not have caused the like. Wherefore the pagans said: Mark is stirring, for they were wont to smell such fragrance every year. Nevertheless there were of them who misdoubted and went to the tomb and opened it and seeing the body I have told of in St Mark's shroud were satisfied. And some there were who came to the ship and searched it about, but when they saw the swine's flesh by the mast did straightly flee from the ship crying, Kanzir! Kanzir! which is to say, Pork! Pork! Now the wind was fair and strong, and they set sail for Venice and on the third day came by Romania (Greece). And a mighty wind arose by night when the mariners were sleeping, and the ship was driving on to the rocks; but the precious Evangelist awakened the master mariner and said to him: Look that thou set down the sails, for

we are making for the land. And the master awakened the shipmen and they struck the sails. And if anyone will know the truth let him come to Venice and see the fair Church of Monsignor S. Marco, and look in front of this fair church, for there is inscribed all this story even as I have related it, and likewise he will gain the great pardon of vii. years which Monsignor the Apostle (the Pope) granted to all who should go to that fair church."

The Doge and clergy welcomed the body with great ceremony, the traders were forgiven their unlawful voyage, and St Mark became the patron of the Republic instead of St Theodore. A modest little chapel was begun on land acquired from the nuns of S. Zaccaria in the Broglio, which was still a grass-grown field planted with trees bounded by the Canal Battario, which flowed across what is now the Piazza of St Mark. In the next reign the body, which had been temporarily placed in the ducal palace, was solemnly transferred to its shrine in the new chapel of St Mark and Stauracio appointed Primicerio or President of the Chapter.

In 829 Giov. Participazio, the third of the dynasty, began his uneasy tenure of eight years. Obelerio plotted to regain his lost power in Venice, but was foiled and executed, and his head exposed on a stake. A more successful rival was the Tribune Caroso, who worked on popular suspicion of the hereditary tendencies in the reigning family, and drove Giovanni to exile in France. Caroso's tyranny, however, was a bad exchange for the milder rule of the exiled Doge. The usurper was overthrown and blinded, and Giovanni recalled. But the same jealousy on the part of the people which made Caroso's *coup d'état* possible again manifested itself. The Doge was seized as he was returning on St Peter's Day from the church at Olivolo; his hair and beard were shaven, and he was forced to retire into a monastery at Grado.

Pietro Tradonico, the chosen of the democracy in 836, was much occupied with the pirates who, from their rocky

fastnesses in the creeks and bays of the Dalmatian coast, swooped down on the rich Venetian argosies as they sailed the Adriatic. By a first expedition he reduced their chiefs for a while to submission; a second was less happy in its results.

The tide of Saracen invasion was met at Caorle and rolled back, and two great ships of war were constructed to guard the *porti*. Amid the stress of war the arts of diplomacy were not neglected. A treaty still exists, dated 840, between Lothair, "By Divine Providence Emperor Augustus and the most glorious Duke of the Venetians," for a period of five years: their relations in peace and war are defined, mutual restitution of runaway slaves is promised, and traffic in the subjects of the contracting powers prohibited; the inviolability of ambassadors and of correspondence assured. Pietro had the honour of welcoming the first royal tourists (855) in the person of King Louis II. of Italy and his consort, who spent three days at Venice. The defeated Participazi were, however, biding their time. In 864 the people's Doge was assassinated when leaving the Church of S. Zaccaria after Vespers and his body lay on the ground until nightfall, when the pious nuns gave it sepulture in the atrium of their church. The chroniclers record the great wisdom and piety of Orso Participazio, who succeeded the murdered Doge. He cleared the seas of pirates, and sought, by calling a synod of clergy and laity, to purge Venice from the iniquitous traffic in slaves, which continued to stain her commerce. Rialto was made healthier by drainage and building; Dorsodura peopled. The growth of the arts of peace may be measured by the fact that the Venetians were able at this time to make a present of twelve bells to the Greek Emperor. Orso died full of years and honours in 881, and was buried in S. Zaccaria. During the short reign of his son Giovanni a descent was made on Comacchio, a city on the mainland north of Ravenna, whose growing power and commerce roused the jealousy of Venice. The Venetians had long memories, and the help given to Pepin

was now avenged by the devastation of the city and the country even up to the walls of Ravenna. In 887 Pietro Candiano, a devout Christian, and a wise and brave prince, was elected, and after a reign of five months met a soldier's death fighting against the pirates. Pietro Tribuno, who succeeded him, was called upon to face a new danger. In the spring of 900 the Hungarians came down the usual track of the barbarian invaders by the Fruilian passes—"that most baneful gate left open by nature for the chastisement of the sins of Italy"—and ravaged the land. They were held too cheaply by Berengarius, King of Italy, and flushed with victory, spread terror even to the lagoons. The preparations made to resist Pepin were renewed. Rialto was fortified and a castle built on the island of Olivolo, which is called Castello to this day. By the way of the Franks the terrible barbarians overran the outer cities of the *dogado*, and made for the *Porto* of Albiola. The Venetian fleet met them, happy omen, at the very spot where Pepin's might was crushed. A fierce fight ensued, and the battle was again to the islanders. The Hungarians were scattered, and fled, never to return; Pietro was hailed by Berengarius preserver of the public liberty, and was honoured by the Eastern Emperor. Two years later the foundations of the old Campanile were laid in a spot where a great elder tree flourished. At the death of the Doge in 912 the Participazii returned to power.

Orso Participazio II. (912) was a saintly and righteous prince who retired to a monastery after a peaceful reign of twenty years, during which the Venetians obtained from the Emperor Rudolph a confirmation of the right to coin their own money. How great was the expansion of their trade is illustrated in the reign of the next Doge, Pietro Candiano II. (932), who, by the simple expedient of a commercial boycott, brought the arbitrary feudal lord of Istria to his knees. In 942, after a short and uneventful term of power by the rival dynasty, Candiano's son Pietro became Doge.



S. MARCO, FROM PIAZZETTA DEI LEONI.

A romantic incident in the ever-recurring battles with the Narentine (Slav) pirates may be referred to this reign. On the feast of the translation of St Mark it was the custom for the marriageable damsels of Venice to repair to



S. PIETRO IN CASTELLO, FROM S. ELNA

S. Pietro in Castello, bearing their dowries with them in caskets, to be formally betrothed to their lovers and receive the benediction of the Church. Informed of this anniversary, some pirates concealed themselves in the thick bush which then covered part of the island, and during the ceremony forced their way into the church, seized brides and dowries, and regained their boats. The Doge, who was present, hastened from the church, and called the people to arms. Some vessels belonging to the Cabinet-makers' Guild, whose quarter was near the Church of S. Maria Formosa, were offered to the Doge. The avengers set forth in pursuit, and came upon the pirates dividing their booty in a remote part of the lagoon of Caorle, afterwards called *porto delle Donzelle*, defeated them, and returned in triumph to Rialto with brides and dowries, the Cabinet-makers having greatly distinguished themselves. To commemorate the rape and rescue of the brides of St Mark, the Doges were used on the day of the Purification to proceed in solemn state to the Church of S. Maria Formosa to render thanks to the Virgin. Twelve poor girls, the *Marie*, were dowered and took part in the procession, together with the chief guilds of Venice.

Simple in its origin, the celebration became more and more sumptuous, till at length so great was the burden on the private resources of the families whose lot it was to provide for the *Marie*, that in 1271 the number was reduced to four. Later, a tax was imposed on every family to meet the cost of the eight days' *festa*. In 1379 the funds were swallowed up in the financial demands of the Genoese wars, and all that remained of the old magnificence was the annual visit of the Doge to the church, and the offering made to him by the parish priest of oranges, muscat wine, and gilded straw hats. The origin of the Doge's attendance at this church, and of the quaint offerings, is traced to a legend that the Cabinet-makers, in acknowledgment of their prowess, asked of the Doge the favour of an annual visit. To the Doge's objection, "But if it be too hot," they answered, "We will give you refreshment"; and to the further objection, "But if it rain," they answered, "We will furnish you with hats." The custom lasted till the end of the Republic. Da Canale gives a graphic description of the festival as it was celebrated in the thirteenth century. On the vigil of the feast of the translation of St Mark, a company of noble youths came by water to the ducal palace, and having distributed banners to some children, formed in line two by two, accompanied by trumpeters and players of cymbals, and by other youths bearing trays of silver loaded with sweets, silver vessels filled with wine, and cups of gold and silver. The clergy followed, arrayed in Calamanco cloth of gold, chanting a litany, and the whole procession went its way to S. Maria Formosa, where a number of dames and damsels were met, to whom wine and sweets were presented. On the last day of January the procession was renewed with greater splendour. Over five hundred banners were distributed, and more than a hundred lads bearing crosses of silver took part. Following the priests came a clerk, dressed as the Virgin, in Damascus cloth of gold, borne in a richly decorated chair on the



A GIRL OF CASTELLO.

shoulders of four men, gonfalons resplendent with gold waving around. The Doge, surrounded by the Venetian nobility, stood at a window of the ducal palace, while three of the clergy chanted the usual lauds of his greatness and power. The Doge then joined the procession, which wended its way to S. Maria Formosa. Here stood another clerk dressed as the angel Gabriel, who sang the "Hail Mary" as the figure of the Virgin appeared. The ceremony being ended, twelve great banquets were held, at each of which one of the *Marie* was present, clad in cloth of gold adorned with jewels and pearls innumerable, and wearing a crown of gold set with precious stones. On the day following, a gorgeous aquatic pageant, more than a mile and a half in length, with the Doge in his *mastro nave*, the clergy and the *Marie* made the tour of the Grand Canal, and "if you were there you could see the whole waters covered with boats filled with men and women, so that no one could count them, and a throng of dames and damsels at the windows and on the banks, apparelled so richly that none in Venice might surpass them." Regattas, balls, and music followed; the whole city gave itself up to joy and gladness.

Pietro Candiano's reign of seventeen years set in storm and calamity. His son and colleague, Pietro, rebelled, and sought to drive his father from the throne. There was a sharp fight on the Piazza; the rebellion collapsed and the Venetian Absalom was only saved from death by the entreaties of his aged father. He was excluded from the succession and banished, but only to turn pirate and harry his countrymen. The scourge of the plague and sorrow for his son's impiety embittered the last days of the old Doge, and in 959 he died a broken-hearted man. But scarce was he laid to rest when a splendid fleet, gay with banners, bore a deputation of nobles and clergy to Ravenna to invite the proscribed pirate to become lord of Venice: the pressure of a powerful family and the fear of civil discord had led to the recall of the only prince who seemed strong enough to rule

the troubled state. He began by blinding and exiling the Bishop of Torcello, guilty of simony, and by calling a synod to deal again with the persistent abomination of the slave trade at Venice. There was no concealment. Slaves, chiefly young girls from twelve to sixteen years of age, bought in the ports of Russia and Circassia, were openly sold by auction at Venice and the deed of sale drawn up by a notary. Doge, clergy and people met in St Mark's and the disgraceful traffic was again prohibited under severe penalties. Another scandal of Venetian commerce was challenged by the Greek Emperor, who in 971 sent an embassy to Venice threatening to burn cargo and crew of any vessel found trading in munitions of war with the Saracens. It was decided that no arms, or iron, or wood for naval construction should be sold to the infidels, exception being made of utensils of carved wood, such as goblets, platters, basins.

But the demons of Pride and Ambition still lurked in the unquiet breast of the Doge. He forced his wife to take the veil at S. Zaccaria that he might marry Gualdrada, sister of the Marquis of Tuscany, who brought him a rich dowry of money and lands. He affected a state of Imperial magnificence, surrounded himself with mercenaries and dragged his subjects to fight for his feudal rights on the mainland. The indignant populace rose in revolt and attacked the palace. Foiled in their purpose by the devotion of the Doge's foreign guards, the insurgents fired the adjacent houses and drove the doomed prince to seek safety by a passage that led into the atrium of St Mark's. Here he was met by a company of Venetian nobles to whom he prayed: "And have you, too, my brothers, willed my destruction. If I have sinned in word or deed, grant me life and I will remedy all." There was an angry shout of, "He is worthy of death," and a dozen weapons were plunged into his breast. His infant son was spitted on a spear in its nurse's arms; the hated mercenaries were slain. The bodies of father and babe were cast to the shambles, and only redeemed by the entreaties of a saintly



S. MARCO FAÇADE.

monk who removed them for burial to the abbey of S. Ilario.

In a city built mainly of wood, fire is a disastrous weapon. Their vengeance glutted, the revolutionists turned to count the cost, and were sobered. The churches of St Theodore, St Mark and S. Maria Zobenigo, the ducal palace, three hundred houses and a large number of factories were destroyed. It was a subdued assembly that met in S. Pietro on August 12th, 976, and elected Pietro Orseolo, a rich patrician descended from an ancient Roman family of the earliest settlers in Torcello. Threats of Imperial vengeance hung over the Republic, and Gualdrada's claims for compensation had to be met. For this, and to rebuild the city, a subsidy of a *decima* was voted to be imposed on the property of each citizen. Artificers were brought from Constantinople and plans for a new St Mark's¹ and a new palace made. The Doge dedicated nearly all his patrimony to the building; founded a hospital for the sick poor near the Campanile, and spent much time as well as money in works of charity. He soon grew weary of the cares of state, and an opportune visit of the Abbot of St Michael's in Aquitaine to Venice confirmed his desire to enter a cloister. He asked for time to prepare. The abbot promised to return and claim him. A year later, on a September night, the abbot and two friars repaired to the monastery of S. Ilario, where they were met by the Doge, his son-in-law and a friend, disguised as pilgrims. Horses were in waiting; they were ferried across the lagoon, and at full speed the party rode for France. On the morrow

¹ Pietro in his two years of office could have done little more than repair the old St Mark's. Recent researches have proved that the present structure was begun in 1061 under Doge Contarini. Part of the ducal palace was pulled down to extend the basilica southwards, and part of the Church of St Theodore incorporated on the north. When the wall, which separated the Chapel of St Isidore from the north transept was stripped, of its marble casing in 1887 it showed a bare surface of brick blackened by exposure to the weather and one of the windows which lighted the north aisle of old St Theodore's.

the Venetians awoke to find their beloved prince fled and the ducal chair vacant. The Candiani who had never ceased intriguing to regain power were ready, and their nominee, Vitale Candiano, was raised to the Dogeship, to retire after fourteen months, sick and disillusioned, to die in a monastery. Pietro Memo succeeded him in 978, a feeble prince, whose reign was dishonoured by the rise of the Caloprini and Morosini factions that in the end nearly compassed the destruction of Venetian liberties. It was the old strife renewed with increased bitterness. The Morosini being partisans of the Orseolⁱ favoured the Byzantines: the Caloprini standing for the Candiani leaned on the western powers. For the first and last time in her history Venice saw her children traitorously inviting a foreign sovereign to enslave their fatherland. The Caloprini, having assassinated Dom. Morosini, fled to the court of Otho II., and impiously laying bare the weak places in their country's defences, called him to conquest. The Emperor was nothing loth. Venice was a standing challenge to the Empire; the only state in Western Europe that stubbornly refused to be absorbed in the feudal system. His subjects were forbidden to trade with the Republic; her food supplies were cut off; her enemies goaded on to attack her; the Caloprini faction in Venice stirred to rebellion; ships of war collected to blockade if not to attack the islands. It was the gravest danger that had ever threatened Venice, for the foes were partly those of her own household. But the stars, which watched over her birth, seemed now in their courses to fight for her salvation. The mighty arm of the Emperor was raised to crush the little state, when the angel of death touched him and it fell impotently to his side.

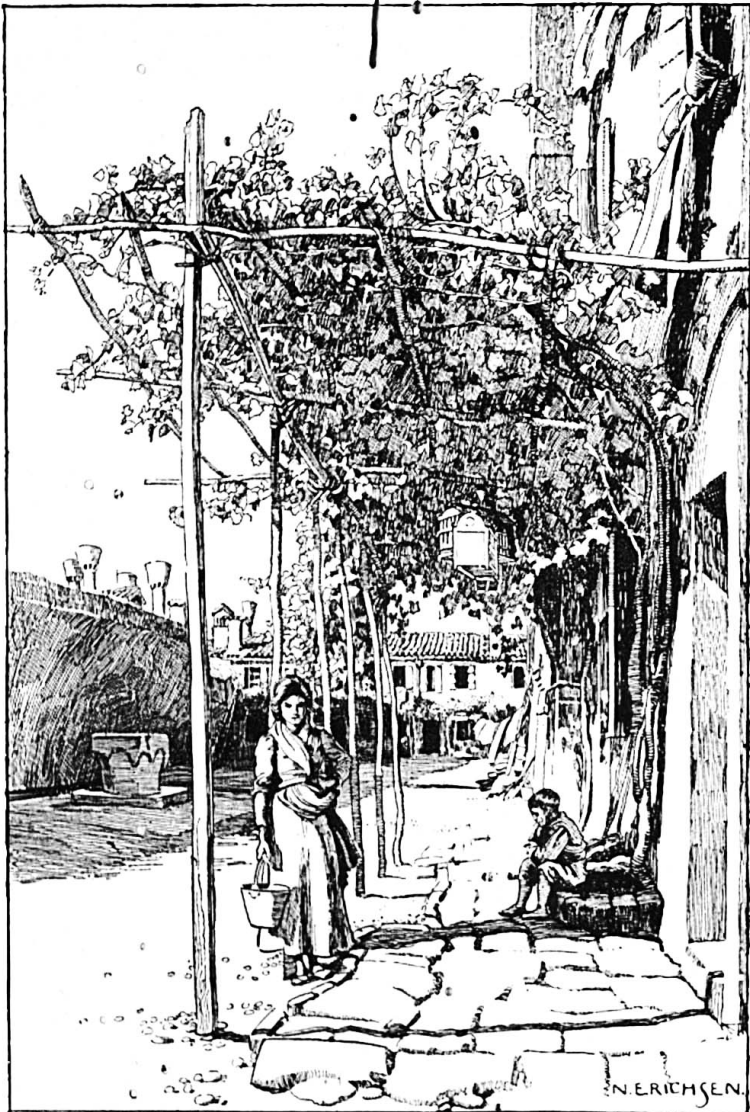
At this epoch arose to guide her destinies one of the greatest princes that ever sat in the ducal chair. Memo, suspected of complicity in a more than usually atrocious assassination, was deposed and forced to enter a monastery, and in 991 Pietro Orseolo II. began his eventful reign. By

his consummate statesmanship the Republic soon found herself at peace with east and west and able to deal with the problem of the Adriatic pirates. The Doge at once abolished the feeble expedient of paying blackmail to their chiefs, and on a renewal of their depredations chastised them into respect. The unhappy borderland along the Dalmatian coast, nominally under the lordship of the eastern Empire, but actually eluding control by east or west, was dotted with a number of small trading communities—Zara, Trau, Spalato, and Ragusa—continually harassed by Slav and Saracen pirates from the sea and by Croats on land. The defeated pirates in their rage now united with the Croats and turned on the Dalmatians, who appealed to Venice, the only power which seemed able to protect them. The Doge at once grasped the importance to Venetian commerce of a protectorate over Dalmatia. The greatest fleet that had hitherto sailed from Venetian waters set forth with banners consecrated by the Church to police the Adriatic. The voyage was a triumphant procession. Chief after chief submitted. At Zara and elsewhere the Venetians were magnificently received: the last stronghold of the pirates, impregnable Lagosta, yielded to the splendid courage of the Venetian seamen. Slavs and Croats were cowed and hostages given for future good behaviour. The woods of Curzola now made Venice independent of Italy for timber. It was the first stage in her development as a European power. The title of Doge of Dalmatia was added to that of Doge of Venice and a ceremony instituted which a hundred and eighty years later became the famous *Sposalizio del Mare* or Wedding of the Adriatic. On the morning of Ascension Day a State barge covered with cloth of gold bearing the clergy of the Chapter of St Mark's in full canonicals and furnished with a vessel of water, a vase of salt and an aspersoir of olive branches, sailed to the Canal of S. Nicolo del Lido to await the Doge's barge, called later the Bucintoro. On its arrival two Canons intoned the litany and the Bishop rose up and solemnly pro-

nounced in Latin the words, *Deign, O Lord, to grant that this sea be calm and peaceful to us and to all that sail upon it; thus we pray. O Lord hear us.* The Bishop blessed the water and, having reached S. Nicolo, drew near to the Doge's barge before the procession advanced into the open Adriatic. The Primicerio then prayed: *Purge me, O Lord, with hyssop, and I shall be clean; the Bishop aspersed the Doge and his suite, and poured what was left of the water into the sea.* Such was the origin of the famous *festa of La Sensa* of which we shall hear more later.

The fame of the Doge's exploits had fired the imagination of the young and ardent Emperor Otho III. who made a mysterious voyage by night to the great Orseolo at Venice and disguised in mean attire went about the strange city marvelling at the glories of its architecture. The new ducal palace had just been completed, a stately embattlemented edifice, in which was constructed a small chapel rich in precious marble and gold and furnished with an organ of wondrous craftsmanship. A romantic affection sprang up between the two potentates which was cemented by the Emperor standing god-father and giving his name to one of the Doge's sons. The friends parted, after much intimate converse, embracing each other and in tears.

Honours too from the East were lavished upon the Doge. Responding to an appeal from the Greeks he led a fleet to Bari, which was invested by the Saracens. Signs and wonders in the heavens heralded his coming, and after three days of hand-to-hand fighting the siege was raised and a Greek army delivered from destruction. The Byzantine Emperor showed his gratitude by bestowing the hand of his niece on the Doge's son Giovanni, and joyous festival was held at Constantinople in honour of the alliance. But whatever pride may have been engendered in the Doge's breast by this almost more than mortal success was soon chastened by failing health, affliction at home, and the desolation wrought by plague and famine in the city. Rich



VINE PERGOLA ON THE GIUDECCA

in piety and charity this noble and heroic servant of the people declined to his end, and at the early age of forty-eight was laid to rest in S. Zaccaria.

The story of the enriching of this church with the body of S. Tarasio is too characteristic to be passed by. We tell it in Sanudo's words. In the year 1019 some Venetian merchants, with whom was a certain priest of Malamocco, disembarked at a promontory called Chiledro. The priest and two companions went into a deserted monastery and heard a voice crying *Tolle hoc corpus sanctum et defer tecum* (Take this holy body and bear it away with thee). He looked around and finding no monument prayed to God for guidance, and soon discerned an altar inscribed, "This body of S. Tarasio shalt thou find wrapped in a cloth." He then turned and saw a cave in which lay the body with four lights burning before it. Now the said priest was sorely hurt in one of his hands, which he carried in a sling, and having entered the cave he at once became whole. As he raised the body, which weighed nought, so light it was, a voice proceeded from it saying, *Tolle me quia tecum venire præsto sum* (Take me, for I am ready to come with thee). They carried the body to the ship, three miles distant, and lo, there came some monks running apace and crying, "Cruel men, give us back our father. Ye shall not depart hence if ye restore him not to us, for once on a time a strange people came and stole a tooth of the saint and never could they depart until they had returned the same to us." But the Venetians caring nought for such words set sail for Venice, and, though the ship was heavy laden, she sailed light as a bird over the sea, so precious a treasure she bore.

Otho Orseolo, who succeeded his father in 1008, by overweening ambition, drew on himself the ill-will of the people. God-son of an Emperor, brother-in-law of the sainted King Stephen of Hungary, he promoted one of his brothers to the patriarchate of Grado (next to the dogeship the most important position in the state), and another to the

See of Torcello. The Patriarchs of Aquileia and of Grado had long been at bitter enmity, and more than once had fought out their quarrels with all too secular weapons. During the Lombard dominion the Patriarchs of Aquileia were tainted with the Arian heresy, whereas those of Grado remained orthodox and claimed jurisdiction over the whole of the lagoons. Moreover, the growing power and wealth of the latter aroused the jealousy of their rivals. The Aquileian Pastor was generally a German by race and sympathies, and subject to the Empire, while the Patriarch of Grado was subject to Venice.¹ The Pastor of Aquileia now organised the popular discontent, and drove his rival of Grado and the Doge to exile in Istria; but the horror wrought in Grado by this warlike churchman, who added perjury to ferocity to accomplish his vengeance, brought about a reaction in the Doge's favour, and he was recalled, only, however, to wreck himself again on the iron-bound determination of the Venetians never to be subject to a feudal prince, and he was again exiled. For Venice was founded by citizens of the Roman Empire, with traditions of municipal freedom and imperial dominion to whom the feudal system of the German conquerors of Italy was alien and hateful. His successor, Dom. Centranico, elected in 1026, was unable to rule the storm, and after an ineffectual reign of six years was shorn of his beard and sent to Constantinople. Again the Venetians turned to the twice-exiled Doge. An honourable embassy was sent to invite Otho to return, only to find him beyond the reach of earthly honours. In the political confusion another Orseolo usurped power for a day, and was chased to Ravenna by the people, whose hatred of the Orseoli was now so fierce that the whole family were ostracised and laws enacted which finally blocked any tendency in the dominant families to form a dynasty.

Under Dom. Flabianico, who was raised to the ducal

¹ In 1456 the See of Castello and the Patriarchate of Grado were united, and S. Lorenzo Giustiniano was made first Patriarch of Venice.

chair in 1032, an *Arengo* was called, and after the acts of the Doges for the past three hundred years, their ungovernable ambitions and tragic ends had been recapitulated, it was decided to abolish association and hereditary succession. Two ducal councillors were appointed to assist the Doge in the discharge of the ordinary duties of his office. In extraordinary matters of grave public importance he was compelled to *invite* the more prominent and experienced citizens to his council. By these two momentous constitutional changes that paring away of the Doge's powers was begun which in the end made of him little more than a figurehead, and gave free play to the evolution of the most capable and powerful oligarchy in history. It is easy to trace in the two *consiglieri ducali* the beginnings of the Ducal Council, and in the "Invited" (*Pregadi*) the Senate, or meeting of the *Pregadi*. The object of the reformers were effected. During the reigns (a period of thirty-eight years) of Flabianico and of Dom. Contarini, the fury of ecclesiastical jealousy alone disturbed the state.

That the choice of the Doge was still democratic in form is clear from an interesting description by an eye-witness, Dom. Tina, of the election of Doge Dom. Selvo in 1071. An immense multitude of citizens came in boats and armed galleys to an assembly on the island of Castello; and while the clergy and the monks from the Abbey of S. Nicolò, founded on the *Lido* in the previous reign, were praying in St Peter's for divine guidance, a mighty shout rose from the people, *Noi volemo dose Domenigo Selvo e lo laudiamo* (We desire and approve Dom. Selvo for Doge). Selvo was seized by a company of nobles and borne shoulder high to his barge, where he bared his feet that he might enter St Mark's in due humility. Tina, who was on Selvo's boat, intoned the *Te Deum*; a thousand voices joined him and a thousand oars dashed the waters into foam. From all the churches bells pealed as the Doge alighted and was carried to St Mark's, where the clergy met him and such psalmody and acclamation

were raised that the very domes of the chapel seemed like to burst with the noise. The Doge entered and prostrated himself to the ground, giving thanks to God and to St Mark for the honour conferred upon him. Having taken the insignia of office from the altar he proceeded to the palace, followed by an immense concourse of people, who in accordance with usage looted the palace of its furniture and received largess from the new Doge.

Selvo's popularity was not, however, shared by his consort, a Greek princess, who shocked the simpler tastes of the Venetians by her oriental luxury. Not only was she said to bathe in dew and scent her robes with costly perfumes, she was of *tanta delicatezza* that she would not touch her food with her fingers, but made use of certain two-pronged instruments of gold to carry it to her mouth. The outraged Divine Majesty, say the chroniclers, punished her by the infliction of a loathsome disease and she sickened into such corruption that none could be found to tend her.