

CHURCH OF S. RUCCO.

Tintoretto has here dealt with the story of the saint in his most unequal fashion. Not all his art can make the scenes of disease and death envisaged in so realistic a manner other than disagreeable. We turn from their contemplation with relief to the noble and stately SS. Christopher and Martin by Pordenone and to the latest of miracle-working pictures, Christ led to Execution, by Titian, in the chapel to the R. of the choir. In the vestibule of the sacristy is Pordenone's fresco, St Sebastian.

SECTION VIII

*S. Zaccaria—S. Giorgio degli Schiavoni—
S. Francesca della Vigna*

WE pass the N. portal of St Mark's, follow the Calle di Canonica, turn R., and first observing the beautiful façade of the Palazzo Trevisan, associated with the memory of the notorious Bianca Cappello,¹ cross the Ponte di Canonica. We continue E., cross the Ponte S. Provolo, pass under a Gothic portal with a restored relief in the lunette of the Virgin and Child, the Baptist and St Mark, and reach the Campo and church of S. Zaccaria, once the chapel of the oldest, richest and most extensive nunnery in Venice (now a barrack), and the burial-place of the early Doges. The present church dates from the second half of the

¹ A rich heiress who, when fifteen years of age, eloped to Florence with a poor bookkeeper and married him. She there became the mistress, then the wife, of Francesco de' Medici, Duke of Tuscany, who was implicated in the assassination of her first husband. Notwithstanding her scandalous past and condemnation by the laws of Venice, the Signory, on her second marriage, took her under their protection for political reasons, and proclaimed her the "true and particular daughter of the Republic." She and the Grand Duke died within a day of each other in 1587, not without suspicion of poison. The Ca' Trevisan was bought by Bianca in 1577, and given to her brother, Vittore Cappello. Francesco Sansovino dedicated his *Venezia Città Nobilissima* to her.

fifteenth century. The visitor will infallibly be drawn to the altar on the L. where stands Giovanni Bellini's Virgin and Child with four saints. R. of the enthroned Virgin stand SS. Lucy and Jerome: L., SS. Catherine of Alexandria and Peter. Though imperfectly preserved and ill seen its charm is indescribable. Feminine tenderness and virile strength, fervent piety and dignity are expressed with all the lucidity and winning grace of the master. It was painted in 1505 when he was seventy-nine years of age.

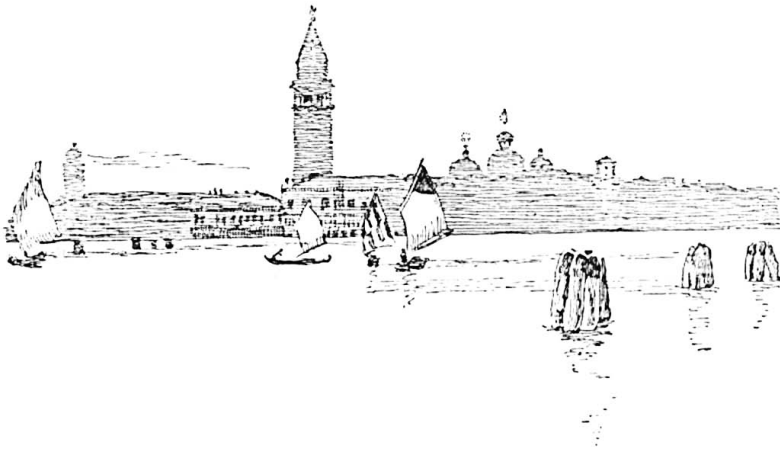
The nuns' choir, entered by a door on the right, has some fine choir stalls by Marco da Vicenza, and some pictures, among them a doubtful Palma Vecchio and a badly-preserved Tintoretto—the Birth of the Baptist. The sacristan will open the chapel of S. Tarasius (p. 31) which contains three gilded, carved altar-pieces of wood with paintings by Giovanni Alemano and Antonio Vivarini. Each altar-piece is inscribed with the name of the donatrix. The expert in the iconography of the saints will find scope for his science in the interpretation of the various symbols. The tomb of Alessandro Vittoria is in the L. aisle.

We return to the Campo S. Provolo and make our way N.E. to the little oratory of S. Giorgio degli Schiavoni (Dalmatians), belonging to the lay foundation (1451) of that name and built (1551) by Zuane Zon, master mason of the arsenal. The foundation is still under Austrian jurisdiction, and a rather poor endowment is helped by a yearly contribution of two lire each from some hundred brethren, the Emperor of Austria assisting by an annual subscription. Three Dalmatian priests serve the chapel. St George's Day, when high mass is sung and the upper chamber is filled by the brethren and their friends, is a great festival. During six years, 1502-8, Carpaccio was employed in decorating the hall with scenes from the lives of three great Dalmatian saints, SS. George, Tryphonius and Jerome. These charming and naïve paintings, happily still in their original setting, have been described by Ruskin in "St Mark's Rest."

L. of the entrance are two panels with scenes from the life of St George. (1) The fight with the dragon; the young princess looks on with clasped hands. The remains of the monster's victims are a somewhat gruesome detail. (2) The victor drags the slain beast, its head transfixed by a dagger, into the city. The gorgeous dresses of the pagan king, the princess and the oriental spectators, the quaint attempts at local colour, and at investing the dragon with some degree of fearsomeness, make the picture one of the most attractive of the series. The story is concluded on the wall L. of the altar. (3) The saint baptises the king and his daughter, carefully holding his cloak lest it be spoiled by the water. This composition is rich in delightfully conceived details of Eastern splendour. R. of the altar-piece (The Virgin and Child by Catena) is a scene from the life of St Tryphonius. He is portrayed as a lad subduing the basilisk which devastated Albania. On the R. wall are the Agony in the Garden and the Calling of Matthew. Then follow three scenes from the life of St Jerome. (1) The terror of the monks at the sight of the lion; (2) death of the saint; (3) the saint in his study translating the Scriptures. The furniture and surroundings in this last, painted with loving care, betray the refined taste of a Venetian scholar. A shelf of books, some manuscripts, an orrery, works of art, objects of devotion, and, a homely detail—the typical Venetian pet dog. The whole scene is pervaded with an atmosphere of calm and studious retirement.

In a northerly direction, towards the Fondamente Nuove, is the great church of S. Francesco della Vigna, whose site is associated with one of the earliest legends of St Mark (p. 17). The land—one of the most extensive vineyards in Venice—was bequeathed to the Franciscans in 1253 by Marco, son of Doge Pietro Ziani. The church was rebuilt (1534-62) by Sansovino, modified subsequently by Palladio, who designed the imposing façade. In a chapel to the R. in the S. transept is

a Virgin and Child by Negroponte. The figures are drawn with great fulness and beauty, and, though much repainted, the picture, executed in 1450, is a remarkable example of the Paduan master's art. The church contains seven ducal monuments; among them, L. of the choir, the tomb of Andrea Gritti (1538). But of greater interest are the beautiful reliefs by Tullio, Ant., and Sante Lombardi in the Giustiniani chapel, L. of the choir, of the prophets and Evangelists, and eighteen scenes from New Testament history. The church also contains two paintings by the Bergamasque artists Franc. and Girolamo di Santa Croce (1500-50); a Holy Family and a Resurrection by Veronese; and, in the chapel on the way to the old cloisters, a Virgin and Child with four saints and donor by Giov. Bellini, debased by re-painting.



SECTION IX

The Riva degli Schiavoni—S. Maria della Pietà—Petrarch's House—S. Giovanni in Bragora—S. Martino—The Arsenal—The Public Gardens—S. Pietro in Castello

TURNING S. from the Piazza we pass the Libreria Vecchia, designed by Sansovino to contain the books left to the