

CHAPTER V

Peace and War—The Holy Inquisition—Conflict with the Genoese—Loss of Constantinople

“Who hath taken this counsel against . . . the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth.”—*Iaiah*.

THE Easter of 1214, falling in a year of general peace and prosperity in Italy, was celebrated by many great festivals. The Trevisans had sent invitations to the whole surrounding country, especially to the Venetians, and never was so magnificent a spectacle. The procession of the Trade Guilds was witnessed by a great multitude, among whom were 2600 noble gentlemen and 3600 gentlewomen with a numerous train of squires and pages and ladies-in-waiting. The principal feature was a Castle of Love erected in the Piazza, with portcullis and turrets complete, decorated inside and out with precious tapestry and other sumptuous ornaments, wherein were placed the fairest and most graceful dames and damsels richly clothed with silk and resplendent with jewels.

It was ordained that they should be striven for *per amore* by three companies of noble youths. On the one part the Trevisans essayed to effect a surrender to them by calling, “*Madama Beatrice, Madama Fiordelice! ora pro nobis!*” On the other part the Paduans exhorted the ladies to yield to them, and shot into the Castle sweets, pasties, tarts and roast chicken that they might eat and be well-disposed. But, if we may believe Sanudo, the Venetians, with a profounder insight into feminine psychology, cast in, with nutmegs, ginger, cinnamon and sweet-smelling spices, *some ducats and other coins*. The fair garrison, seeing the *gentilezza* of the

Venetian youths at once capitulated. Whereupon was great rejoicing and the standard of St Mark was run up on the Castle ramparts. This proved too much for the Paduans; they waxed wroth and tore down the Venetian standard and broke it to pieces. An undignified scuffle ensued and the celebration of peace ended in open war. The Paduans aided by the Trevisans, wasted Venetian territory, advancing near to Chioggia and threatening the fortress of Bebbe, but by the prompt action of the Podestà of Chioggia, who called out the militia without waiting for orders, the garrison was relieved and the Paduans routed. Four hundred prisoners were made, among whom were two hundred nobles, and taken to Venice. The Paduan prisoners were humiliated—it is said by offering ten of them to any Venetian who brought a white hen—and afterwards released without ransom through the mediation of the Patriarch of Aquileia. The Chioggians were relieved of a tribute of twenty couples of hens due to the Doge, and their Podestà was richly rewarded.

For twenty-five years save one, Ziani presided over the destinies of the Republic. Her commercial influence was extended. Valuable treaties were concluded with Germany, Hungary, Aleppo, Egypt and Barbary.

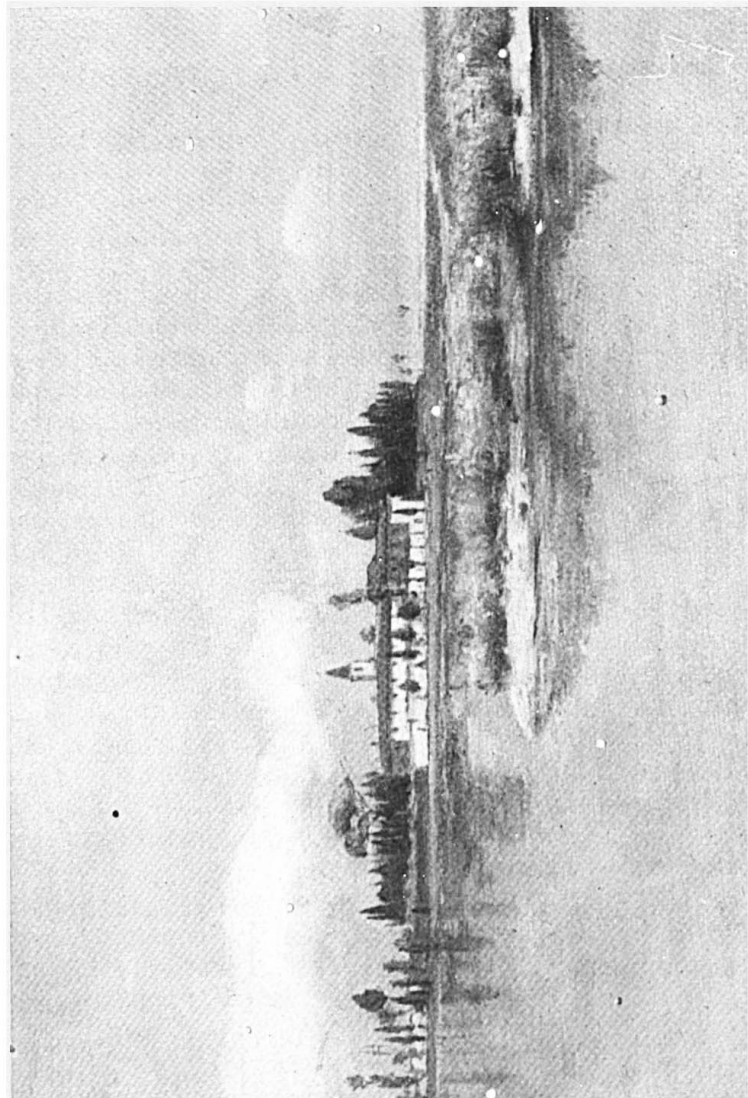
“In this reign,” says Sanudo, “were two most saintly men, Francis of Assisi and Domenic of Spain. Now St Francis returning¹ from beyond the seas came to Venice where he found that many birds were come to sing on the boughs of the trees in the marshes. He having gone thither with his companion, stood in the midst of the birds reciting the offices and commanded them to be silent; whereupon they kept silence, nor did they depart until he had given them leave. And he stayed in a certain oratory where at present are a church and monastery of the friars called San Francesco del Deserto.” The traveller to-day on his way to

¹ Probably from his attempt to convert the Sultan in 1219-1220. See Sabatier's “Vie de St François, p. 271.” The story of the birds is obviously an echo of the *Fioretti*.

Torcello will see in the distance on his right hand the island and monastery, with its picturesque setting of pine and cypress. It is still inhabited by a few brothers and recalls the sweetest, gentlest human soul that ever breathed since Him of Galilee.

The choice of Ziani's successor gave rise to a novel incident. The votes of the College were equally divided between Marino Dandolo and Giacomo Tiepolo. For five days they were scrutinised in the vain hope of finding a casting vote. The Senate then authorised an appeal to chance. Lots were cast, and fortune declared in favour of Giacomo Tiepolo on the 6th of March 1229. During the interregnum between the resignation of Ziani and the election of his successor opportunity was taken to strengthen still further the power of the aristocracy and to weaken that of the Doge. A Board of Correctors of the Ducal *Promissione* or Coronation oath, and another of Inquisitors of the dead Doge were formed. The former was composed of five men of great wisdom and experience, whose duty it was to examine and reform the *Promissione* at the death of each Doge. On the latter board three sat who were charged to listen to the complaints of those who felt aggrieved at any action of the late Doge; to examine his papers for any unpaid debts, and award praise or blame of his conduct whether as citizen or as head of the state. As a result, the *Promissione Ducale* exacted from Dandolo and Ziani was made still more stringent in the case of Tiepolo. He was forbidden to communicate with foreign princes or to interfere in ecclesiastical matters: he was made to pay taxes. The *Promissione* sworn by Tiepolo is given in full by Romanin, and covers nine closely-printed large octavo pages. The details are curious: the number of his cooks was fixed; he swore to receive no gifts nor presents of any kind from any person save and except rosewater, flowers, sweet-smelling herbs and balsam, "which it shall be lawful for us and our agents to receive."

A great work was done in the codification and reform of



ISLE OF S. FRANCESCO DEL DESERTO.

the statute laws. The navigation laws were made a model of humane legislation.

Meanwhile anxious eyes were again turned to the East. As the Latin kingdom waned the Republic had increased her power at Constantinople, and in return for naval services the arsenal was ceded to her. On the death of Robert Courtenay the crown descended to his brother, Baldwin II., a lad of ten. But in stirring times a child emperor was impossible, and John of Brienne, titular king of Jerusalem; a heroic old crusader, was during his minority chosen as Emperor.

John of Brienne had filled his thankless office but two years when the capital was menaced by the allied forces of the Emperor of Nicea and the King of Bulgaria. It was a critical moment. The Latin army was much reduced by desertion, and it is said Brienne had less than two hundred knights and four hundred footmen to oppose an army of many tens of thousands. But the brave old Emperor—he was eighty years of age—put himself at the head of his little band and sallied forth to meet the host. An impetuous charge scattered them like chaff. The Venetians, too, were not slack. An urgent message had been sent for help, and a fleet of twenty galleys was hastily sent to Constantinople, which swooped down on the Greek fleet at the entrance to the Dardanelles. The whole *Armata* and transports were destroyed or taken, and the Venetian admirals made triumphant entry into Constantinople to receive the felicitations of the Emperor. Two years later the Greeks were again foiled by the irresistible onslaught of the Venetian and Latin fleets.

At the death of John of Brienne financial ruin was impending and a strange expedient was adopted to raise a loan. Of the sanctuary spoils at the taking of Constantinople, the crown of thorns had been appointed to the emperor. It was now brought forth with the lance of the passion and mortgaged to the Venetian Bailo of Constantinople, Alberto Morosini, for the loan of 14,000 *perperi* subscribed by the

leading merchants. The bill fell due: the money was not forthcoming and the security was legally forfeited. But a third party was found in the person of a rich Venetian banker, who, towards the end of the year 1237, advanced the sum for a month to give breathing time. If the payment was again deferred the lender might remove the relic to Venice for a period of four months, which being expired the mortgagee was empowered to foreclose. Meanwhile the saintly king, Louis IX. of France, had heard of the transaction and was much scandalised. He sent two Dominicans to Constantinople to redeem the pledge and secure the precious relic for Paris. It was, however, already on its way to Venice when the two black friars reached the capital of the Empire. The good ship that was freighted with the thorns arrived at Venice on the 4th of September 1238. Hastily the envoys retraced their steps and sought an audience of Tiepolo, who straightway led them to St Mark's and showed them the sacred treasure. They then went to the banker and offered the money to redeem the pledge. It was handed to the friars who returned joyfully to Paris. King Louis, barefoot and in his shirt, took part in the solemn procession that accompanied the relic through the streets of Paris and the Sainte Chapelle, the richest gem of Gothic architecture in North Europe, was built to receive it.

Commercial expansion continued through Tiepolo's reign. Trieste renewed her fealty and treaties were concluded with Ravenna, Padua and Ragusa. The Sultans of Aleppo and of Egypt confirmed and extended privileges granted to the Venetians, and owing to the skill of their ambassadors Barbary and Armenia were generous in concessions. To the tale of saintly relics were added the bodies of St Marina and of St Paul the first hermit, minus the head.

"In Tiepolo's time," says Sanudo, "so I have read, our citizens went as magistrates to all the cities of Italy, for

they were righteous men." They were usually chosen by the free communes of Lombardy, where their capacity and incorruptibility made them eagerly sought for. The Doge's son, Pietro, ruled at Treviso; a Zeno at Bologna; a Morosini at Faenza; a Dandolo at Conegliano; a Badoer at Padua. The cities of the Lombard League deposited their funds with Venetian bankers. The papacy which had consistently taken the side of the free cities of Italy against the western emperors now found herself sorely pressed in her fierce struggle with Frederic II. Pope Gregory IX. turned with longing eyes to the one Italian state that could decide the contest. Desire for vengeance and state policy made it easy for Venice to join the league—at a price. Eccelino da Romano, at Frederic's instigation, had devastated Venetian territory up to Mestre and Murano to punish the Republic for her moral support to the league. It was agreed that the Venetians should fit out a punitive expedition to Sicily, of which half the cost was to be met by the Pope, who promised moreover to cede Bari and Salpi to them and to grant in feud all the territory they might conquer in Apulia and Sicily.

Ferrara, formerly held from the Holy See by Azzo of Este, had become a Ghibelline stronghold and Azzo had been banished. To Venice happily Guelph and Ghibelline were but names. No factions destroyed her domestic peace; no feudal tyrants spoiled her citizens, or fury of popular jealousy flung itself against her nobles. But in Ferrara valuable trading rights granted by the Countess Matilda and maintained by the Guelphs were ignored by the Ghibellines. The restoration of these rights was made the price of her alliance with the Papal forces in an attack on Ferrara. The siege was a long one. The city was defended by the Imperialists under the most famous soldier of the day, Taurelli Salinguerra. At a critical moment the Papal legate appealed for help to the Doge, who, impelled by memories of his great predecessor,

determined to take command of the forces in person. His son was left to rule in his absence, and after mass in the Church of Santo Spirito the expedition sailed forth, the Bucintoro, with the Doge on board, leading. Ferrara was subdued and the Doge was careful before leaving to exact from the restored Azzo the reinstatement of the Venetians in their former advantageous position as traders. Meanwhile the naval expedition had reached Apulia and after devastating many cities, returned to Venice with a rich booty.

Tiepolo is said to have possessed a prodigious memory. "This note I have found," says Sanudo, "*solum* in one chronicle, yet it was the truth. This Doge was very wise and had great fame through all parts of the world. When any ambassadors came to deliver their suits he held his eyes shut: after he had heard he recited chapter by chapter and answered everything which they had expounded in such manner that all marvelled greatly at so profound a memory, for he was a most wise Doge." On the 20th of May, 1249, Tiepolo, weary of his burden of the state, laid it down to retire to his house in S. Agostino.

The foundation in 1234 of the Dominican Monastery and Church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo (S. Zanipolo) was due, the chroniclers relate, to the piety of the Doge, who saw in a vision the oratory and neighbouring Piazza of San Danieli filled with flowers and white doves bearing on their heads crowns of gold, and two angels came down from heaven and perfumed the place with golden censers. Then a voice was heard saying: "This is the spot I have chosen for my preachers." Thereupon the Doge made over certain marshy lands near Santa Maria Formosa to Brother Alberico of the Dominicans, and aided by papal favour and the piety of individuals the building was so far advanced by 1293 that it was ready to accommodate the general chapter of the order. The facade was finished in 1351, and after the lapse of a century the mortal remains of the founder were laid there.

His simple tomb wrought with figures of doves and angels, recalling the visions, still exists on the left of the entrance. The great church and monastery of the rival order of friars, S. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, was also begun in Tiepolo's reign. Until that time the friars of St Francis, says Sanudo, had no monastery in this city and dwelt near S. Lorenzo, where they worked with their hands and lived by their labour and by alms.

At Tiepolo's death the electoral college increased to forty-one, chose Marin Morosini, an experienced magistrate and civil servant, as his successor. Meantime the Inquisitors had met and decided that the late Doge had been too zealous in the advancement of his sons. A new clause was therefore added to the coronation oath forbidding the Doge to ask or cause to be asked any office for any person, or to accept any charge outside Venetian jurisdiction or in Istria.

The short reign of Morosini was marked by one important innovation. The Republic by tradition and policy was eminently tolerant. It was essential to a great commercial metropolis that men of all nations and of all creeds should freely assemble and carry on their business without fear of ecclesiastical penalties. Venice therefore had consistently refused to admit the tribunal of the Holy Inquisition within her boundaries. In the *Promissione Ducale* of Morosini, however, an article was inserted by virtue of which the Doge was ordered to name in agreement with his Council certain religious men of integrity and wisdom who were to search out heretics, and commit to the flames those who were declared to be such by the Patriarch of Grado or any of the bishops of the Dogado. But before condemnation the consent of the Doge and his Council had first to be obtained. The Republic thus asserted her authority and defended her subjects from arbitrary and ecclesiastical domination. This, however, was far from satisfying the papal authorities. The Venetians were repeatedly exhorted to admit the jurisdiction of the Holy Office itself, but nothing further was effected

until 1285 when it was decided to accept the Inquisition, but under stringent limitations. Two of the three Inquisitors appointed by the Pope were made subject to the veto of the Doge. Three lay representatives, *the Savii all' Eresia*,¹ over whom the Vatican should have no power to assert direct or indirect power, were to be present at every session of the tribunal with the object of preventing abuses, false accusations, or any exercise of arbitrary power. They had the right to suspend proceedings or stay execution of sentences, and were charged to keep the Government informed of all that transpired at the sessions of the Holy Office. Generally they were to maintain the purity of the faith while safeguarding the rights of the State. No extradition was allowed. The property of condemned heretics² was to descend to their heirs. The funds of the Holy Office were to be under the charge of a Venetian treasurer who was to render his account and be responsible to the civil authorities alone.

Morosini's reign was a peaceful and happy one. "So long as he was Doge," says Da Canale, "the Venetians were doubly blest, and with joy and gladness their hearts were filled. Every man, rich or poor, increased his substance, for Messer Marino Morosini was right gracious and none durst assail him in war. His ships went beyond the seas to all places without guard of galleys: he had peace with all: the sea in his time was void of robbers."

The advent of Renier Zeno in 1253 to the Ducal throne was marked by a further suppression of popular rights. It was decreed that, before publication of the new Doge's name by the electoral college of the forty-one, the people should swear to accept their choice. The blow was accompanied by an application of Napoleon's favourite device—Amuse the

¹ Experts in heresy.

² According to the archives of the Holy Office only six cases are found of the death penalty, drowning or strangling (never burning), being inflicted for heresy in Venice.

people with toys. A magnificent tournament and gorgeous processions celebrated the new Doge's election and enthronement. Zeno was a tried administrator and soldier; he had commanded as *podestà* the Bolognese forces at the siege of Ferrara. Nor did his military genius rust for lack of use. In his troublous reign of sixteen years began the long and exhausting struggle with Genoa for naval supremacy and commercial monopoly.

At St Jean d'Acre was a church dedicated to St Sabbas, and there the Genoese and Venetians were wont to worship in common—each, however, claiming exclusive ownership in the building. A dispute as to an alleged Venetian corsair captured by the Genoese ended in a riot. The Genoese raided the Venetian ships, sacked their quarter of the city, and burnt the church.

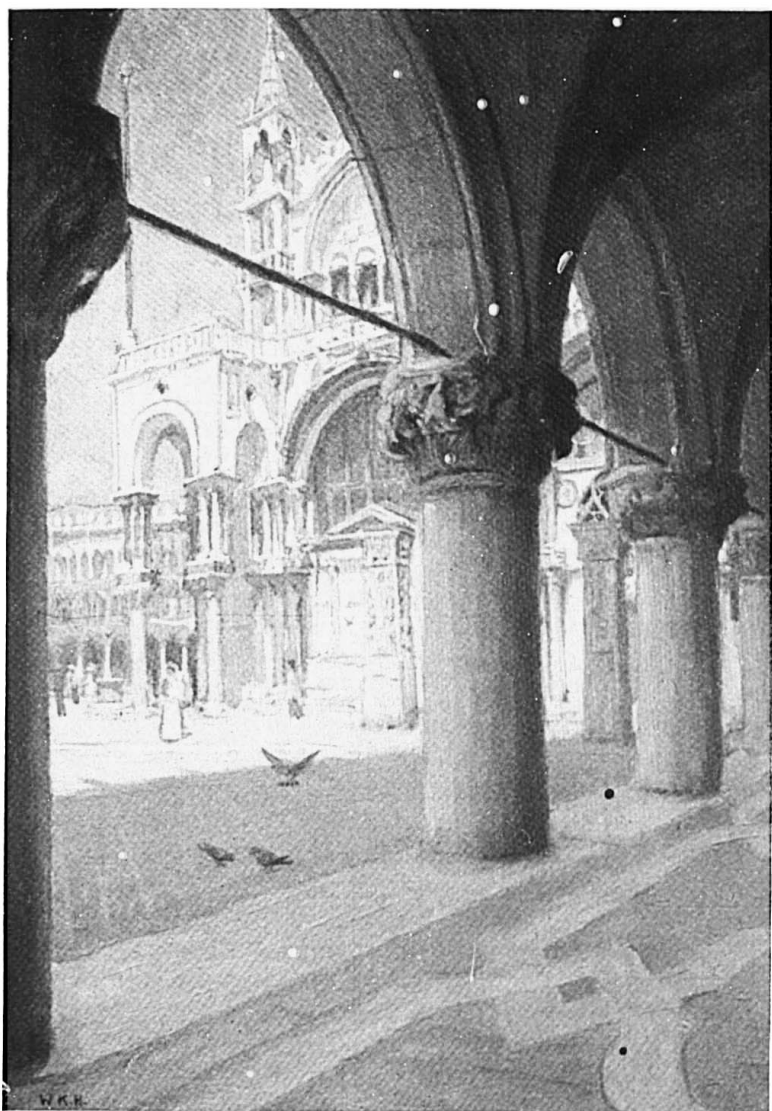
After vain and perhaps insincere attempts at pacification Venice determined to wreak vengeance on her rival, and in 1286 Lorenzo Tiepolo was despatched with a fleet to Acre. He spoiled and burned the Genoese vessels in harbour, landed and destroyed part of their settlement, and after some fighting captured their stronghold, the castle of Mongioia. They sued for a truce, which was granted for two months. As trophies and palpable sign of his success, Tiepolo sent to Venice the short column of porphyry which now stands at the south-west angle of St Mark's known as the *Pietra di Bando*, (proclamation stone), because there were promulgated the laws of the Republic; and the two beautifully decorated, square, marble columns that stand side by side facing the Piazzetta, over against the south side of the church.

The truce was a hollow one. Each side was eager to try its strength again, and fleets were hastily collected. A desperate battle was fought between Acre and Tyre. The Genoese were defeated and their admiral was taken prisoner. Meanwhile a second Venetian squadron raided the Genoese settlements all over the Levant. Domestic troubles at Genoa prevented for a time further action, but

in 1258 a new fleet was fitted out and set sail under Rosso della Turca to retrieve her fortunes. The Venetians, too, had reinforced their admiral, and the hostile squadrons met on Midsummer Day near the scene of Tiepolo's former victory. A day was spent in vain attempts by the Genoese admiral to outmanœuvre his enemy. On the morrow he was forced to give battle. Before the action Tiepolo delivered a stirring oration to his men, exhorting them to brave deeds. He bade them remember that the honour of Venice, the command and security of the seas, were at stake. A great shout of *Viva San Marco protettore del Veneto dominio* was raised, and the attack began. It was a long, bloody and stubborn fight. In the end the Venetians were again victorious. Twenty-five galleys and 2600 men were captured and sent to Venice, the prisoners being lodged in St Mark's granaries. The remainder of the fleet was scattered and Tiepolo's damaged vessels returned to Acre to refit, where the Venetians in the heat of victory stained their country's reputation by a wanton attack on the Genoese quarter, which they sacked and burned.

It was a heartrending spectacle to Christian Europe: another act in that pitiful and suicidal struggle between the two most powerful maritime states which in the end reduced one to impotence, and left the other too exhausted to resist the advancing tide of Turkish conquest. The Papacy, generally solicitous to compose the differences of Christian states, intervened, and an honourable but temporary peace was made.

Three years passed and a fresh storm burst in the East. Under the feeble rule of Baldwin II. the Latin Empire was tottering to its fall. Self-indulgence and corruption had destroyed the character of the Frankish knights, death, desertion and private interest had reduced their numbers. The Emperor, poor futile creature, had employed most of his reign in wandering about Europe from court to court, whining for outside help. The Crown of Thorns had already

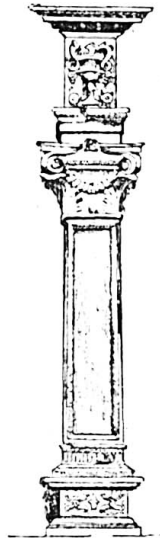


S. MARCO, FROM COLONNADE OF PALAZZO DUCALE.

been pledged, the rich jewels and precious objects *alla greca*, the beautiful icons of gold and silver, known in Sanudo's time as the jewels of St Mark, had followed, and the emperor's son was now left at Venice, a princely pawn, for a loan advanced by the Cappellos. Meanwhile by the energy of her princes the Greek empire of Nicea was being welded into a powerful military state. In 1260, Michael Paleologus, guardian of the heir to the throne, had bid for and won the imperial office. To make his hold secure he aimed at nothing less than the restoration of the Greek Empire at Constantinople. By prudent and virile measures he had collected an army of 25,000 men near the city under the command of his favourite general, Alexios. One of the gates was treacherously opened by night. The city was entered; the Greek inhabitants, weary of alien domination, welcomed the invaders, and the imperial city that cost the apostasy of a Christian army, two sieges and the flower of Frankish chivalry, was lost in a night. Venice truly had long foreseen the danger, and had kept a great armament in the Bosphorus to watch events. Was she playing for a higher stake and hoping ultimately to pick up the falling Frankish sceptre? *Chi sa?* What did happen to the amazement and disgust of the Home Government was that the fleet, when the critical moment came, was away on a punitive expedition in Thrace, and returned only in time to receive the fugitive Baldwin and the Venetian governor. The crestfallen admirals gazed impotently at the reddening sky, on a multitude of their fellow-countrymen and their allies on the shore stretching forth their hands to implore protection, and heard the cries of the victims, and the exultant shouts of the conquerors in the city. On the 26th of July 1261, Michael Paleologus made a triumphant entry into Constantinople, once more the capital of the Greek Empire, and the pillage was stayed. It was a bitter humiliation to Venice. She knew the Genoese had secretly allied themselves with the new Empero., and soon learned

the price of the alliance. The island of Chios, a Venetian possession, was made over to them for a trading station. The very palace of the Venetian governor was surrendered to them, and later was razed, the more precious of its marble decorations being sent as spoil to Genoa.

Negropont, a Venetian fief, was with Michael's approval seized and the Venetians expelled. All the results of more than fifty years' effort and sacrifice were lost in a few hours, and the proud masters of the masters of the Latin Empire found themselves degraded to the level of Pisa in the city they perhaps regarded as their ultimate prize.



DETAIL: PALAZZO ZICHY-ESTERHAZY