

## CHAPTER VIII

### *Conquests on the Mainland—Execution of Marin Faliero— The Fall of Genoa*

“ Ill-fated chief—  
Him, only him, the shield of Jove defends  
Whose means are fair and spotless as his ends.”  
—*Wordsworth.*

WHEN the Great Council met in 1328 after Soranza's death the oldest member rose, and after uttering praises of the late Doge and lamentations at his death, exhorted all around to be of good heart and to pray God for the election of a wise prince to succeed him.

And never had Venice greater need of wisdom in her rulers. Unhappy Italy, “reeling like a pilotless vessel in a mighty tempest,” had seen the last vain attempt of the Emperors to execute their ideal function. The heroic spirit of Henry VII. of Luxemburg, *l'alto Arrigo*, had already ascended to fill the vacant and crowned seat, which Dante saw awaiting him among the ranks of the blest, and the poet's hopes of a Cæsar firmly seated in the saddle and curbing the wanton and savage beast of faction in Italy were shattered. From the political chaos three great families of despots emerged in North Italy, the Scalas of Verona, the Viscontis of Milan and the Carraras of Padua. In 1329 the lords of Verona under Mastino della Scala held sway over Vicenza, Padua and Treviso. Mastino, an ambitious prince subtly urged by the deposed Marsilio da Carrara of Padua, determined to tap the wealth of the Republic by levying duties on all Venetian goods passing through his territories. Venice retaliated by cutting off the supply of salt and a

tariff war began. But her food supplies soon ran short and an appeal to arms impended. It was a tremendous choice, for the strength of Venice lay in her naval not in her military power. To fight the mainland despots she must employ mercenaries and successful *condottieri* were bad servants. Her infallible bulwark, the sea, would be gone, squandered for a vulnerable land frontier and the financial drain of a continental policy.

Such were the considerations that appealed to the mind of the new Doge Francesco Dandolo. But the time was past when a Doge could dictate the policy of the State. The oligarchy felt that inaction meant national suicide. If the passage for Venetian goods to North and West Europe was blocked, it meant ruin to her trade, and war was declared in the chivalrous fashion of the times. To the confines of Padua, envoys were sent, who delivered a protest and in token of defiance, three times cast a stone into the enemy's territory. A levy was made on all males between twenty and sixty years of age, and alliances concluded with Florence, Milan, Ferrara and Mantua. Mastino, alarmed at the coalition against him, sent Marsilio da Carrara to treat with the Signory. Marsilio was invited, so the story runs, to sit next the Doge at dinner. The "wily old fox" made a sign to the Doge that he wished to speak with him. The Doge let fall his knife. Marsilio bent down to pick it up and as the Doge bent down too, whispered: "What would you give him who gave you Padua?" "We would make him lord of Padua," replied the Doge. Mastino was unable to stand before so powerful a combination. Padua by collusion with the Carraras fell to Venetian arms, and Alberto della Scala, Mastino's brother, was led captive to Venice. Marsilio became once more lord of Padua. The provinces of Treviso and Bassano were made over to Venice, who thus came into possession of one of the passes into North Europe and a rich corn land in North Italy. The glorious initiation of this new and vaster policy was celebrated with great rejoicings at

Venice and the propoets of evil were silenced. The Republic proved herself a wise and tolerant mistress. Her new subjects were ruled with 'a paternal' regard for their welfare, while local feeling and characteristics were tenderly treated. The device which still remains from Venetian times over the town-hall of Verona, *Pro summa fide summus amor*, admirably expresses the attitude of the Republic towards her mainland provinces. The citizens of many a State scourged with the scorpions of Italian despots hailed with delight the advent of Venetian rule. Saudo in his diary describes the entry into Faenza of the Venetian governor on its occupation in 1495. The streets were decorated with tapestry and cloth. For many days the painters had been doing nought but paint *San Marco* on the doors of the houses. The whole city with great demonstration of joy came forth to receive the new governor, shouting "Marco! Marco!" A quarter of a century later the Venetian ambassador was able to tell Cardinal Wolsey that although the Duke of Milan and the Marquis of Mantua were candidates for the governorship of Verona, the Venetian army as it defiled through the mountains was received by the Veronese with joyful cries of "Marco! Marco!" and the Venetian commissioner installed in the seat of government. St Mark's lion on his column standing in the market-place of an Italian city was the symbol of a firm, just, enlightened rule.

While Bart. Gradenigo was Doge, Venice was visited by an awful tempest. For three days the angry waves surged against the city. On the third night, February 25, 1340, so runs the legend, as the storm increased in violence a poor old fisherman was making fast his boat at the Molo when he was accosted by a stranger who craved to be ferried over to the island of S. Giorgio Maggiore. The fisherman, terrified by the awful storm, would not venture, but being urged and reassured by the stranger, he loosed his boat and they set forth and reached the island. Here a mysterious knight embarked and commanded that they should be rowed to S.

Nicolo on the Lido, and on the boatman protesting the danger of going with one oar he was again comforted and promised good pay. Arrived at S. Nicolo, a third stranger, a venerable old man, joined them and demanded to be taken out to sea. Scarcely had they reached the open Adriatic when they beheld a ship filled with devils pressing swiftly forward to wreak destruction on Venice. Soon as the three strangers sighted the vessel they made the sign of the cross and ship and devils vanished. The sea grew calm: Venice was saved. The three strangers were then rowed back whence they departed and revealed themselves as St Mark, St George and St Nicholas. As St Mark stepped ashore he was stayed by the boatman, who demurred to accepting the honour of taking part in the miracle as adequate payment. "Thou art right," answered the saint, "go to the Doge and tell what thou hast seen and ask thy reward. And say this has happened because of the master of a scuola at S. Felice, who had sold his soul to the devil and at last hanged himself." The old man protested: "Even though I tell this, the Doge will not believe me." St Mark then drew a ring from his finger the worth of which was about five ducats, gave it to the fisherman, saying, "Show this to the Doge and bid him keep it in my sanctuary." The saint's bidding was done and the fisherman well rewarded.

In 1343 Andrea Dandolo was raised to the Dogeship. The first patrician who had taken a doctor's degree at Padua, he had already served on the Ten, and filled the office of Procurator of St Mark, when at thirty-six years of age he was elected Doge. Plague, earthquake and war scourged the Venetians during the scholar Doge's reign. Zara, tempted by the Hungarians, tried another fall with her Venetian masters for independence. Marin Faliero, a member of one of the most ancient and illustrious families of Venice, who had served as *podestà* of Padua and of Treviso, was placed in command of a land force: forty galleys set forth under Pietro da Canale to attack by sea. Faliero, met the Hun-



garians forty thousand strong about eight miles from Zara, and won a decisive victory. Meanwhile Canale had forced the harbour, and in a few months the tough old fortress again surrendered. The walls were dismantled, and this time a strong Venetian garrison was left to overawe the Zaratines.

For a century Genoese and Venetians had been rivals in the Crimea for the control of the fur trade with Tartary. In 1346 Marin Faliero was sent to Genoa to complain of certain piratical acts by the Genoese. The latter retorted by accusing the Signory of bad faith in dealing with the Tartars. But the ravages of the Black Death in 1348, when two-fifths of the people of Venice are said to have perished, and fifty noble families to have become extinct, absorbed for a time the attention of the Republic. In 1349 friction with the Genoese led to a definite breach, and another act in the tragedy of Christendom was begun. Two years of naval warfare passed with little advantage to either power. In 1353, in alliance with Peter of Aragon and the Emperor of Constantinople, the Venetians sailed up the Bosphorus and came upon the enemy under Paganino Doria, off Pera. Two hours before sunset the engagement began and a long and bloody struggle raged through the night, illumined only by the lurid glare of burning ships. The Venetians were defeated, and Nicolo Pisani, their commander, retired to Crete to recruit and await reinforcements. In February 1353 he was able to join the Aragonese fleet in Sardinian waters and attack the Genoese under Ant. Grimaldi off Lojera. The enemy were outmanœuvred, their armament utterly destroyed, and Grimaldi, with a few shattered galleys, reached Genoa crushed and humiliated. Panic seized the city. In the despair engendered by defeat a momentous step was taken. The cowed Genoese surrendered their independence and implored the protection of Giov. Visconti, Lord Bishop of Milan. Time for recuperation was, however, needed, and Visconti sought peace for his new vassal by

sending Petrarch to Venice as his envoy. The poet had already, by an epistle to Dandolo, which reads like an echo of his pathetic canzone *All' Italia*, besought the rivals to exchange the kiss of peace and not persist in a war which must end in one of the eyes of Italy being quenched, the other dimmed. As well appeal to two eagles fighting for their quarry. After some weeks at Venice, honoured as a poet but unheeded as a messenger of peace, he returned sorrowing to Milan. A year passed, and a new fleet left Genoa under Doria, who cleverly slipped by Pisani, sailed up the Adriatic, devastated Lesena, Curzola and Parenza, and anchored within striking distance of the lagoons. It was now the turn of Venice to feel alarm. The channels were fortified, a new fleet was equipped, a war tax levied. The Doge, prostrated by the news, never recovered, and died of a broken heart on September 7th, 1354. He lies in the Baptistery that he did so much to beautify, and under his noble and simple monument there still remains the Latin epitaph composed for him by Petrarch, his friend. Andrea Dandolo is remembered as a Venetian historian and an accomplished legislator, a lover of the arts, and a great humanist.

On October the 4th the Bucintoro was sent to Chioggia to meet Marin Faliero, recalled from the Roman legation to assume the ducal cap. The great State barge set forth, but so dense a fog enveloped Venice that it was deemed prudent to land in small boats. The gondola bearing Faliero failed to make the usual stage by the Ponte della Paglia, and, sinister augury, landed the Doge between the red columns of the Piazzetta.

Faliero, however, began his term of office happily by signing a truce with the Genoese. The breathing time was used in concentrating the fleet, and scarcely was the term ended when Nicolo Pisani, with his son Vettore, sailed for the Ionian Isles in search of Doria. But the Genoese refused to be drawn, and Pisani went into winter quarters at Portolungo in the Morea behind the island of Sapienza. Doria

saw an opportunity to trap his enemy. By a brilliant manœuvre he got part of his fleet between the Venetians and the shore, and attacking front and rear routed them with terrible loss, no less than six thousand being made prisoners. Pisani and his lieutenant, Quirini, escaped with the remnant of the armament to be impeached and degraded in Venice. Under the shadow of this disaster Venice displayed her wonted fortitude. With admirable self-control the Signory exhorted all their *podestà*, consuls and agents to be of good courage, and called for men and ships in defence of the fatherland. Eight thousand ducats were despatched to Genoa to soften the lot of the captives. Before, however, the spring made further operations possible, a truce was effected by the mediation of the Emperor; and while negotiations were pending for a definite peace, Europe was shocked by the news of the trial and execution of a Doge of Venice. The chroniclers give very circumstantial details of the drama, but to Petrarch, who was on terms of closest intimacy with the Doge, and to other contemporaries the whole business was shrouded in mystery. No record of the trial exists.

Faliero was of a proud and fiery temper. While *podestà* at Treviso he is said to have boxed the bishop's ears for having kept him waiting at a religious procession. After the usual bull-fight and festivities in the Piazza on Carnival Thursday the Doge gave a sumptuous banquet and dance in the palace. Among the guests was a young noble, Michel Steno, who, heated with wine, misconducted himself and was by the Doge's orders expelled from the hall. Steno, furious with rage, pencilled on the ducal chair, as he passed through the Doge's apartment, an insulting reflection on the Doge's honour: *Marin Falier della bella mujer tu la mantien e altri la galde*. Steno was accused before the Quarantia and let off with a punishment which the Doge regarded as derisory. On the morrow it befell that a choleric noble, Marco Barbaro, went to demand certain things of the Arsenal authorities, and

being refused struck the Admiral Ghisello with his clenched fist. He was wearing a ring and, an ugly wound was left. The Admiral, with bloody face went straightway to the Doge and prayed to be avenged. "What would you?" said the Doge; "Look at the shameful words written of me and the way that ribald Steno has been treated." "*Messer lo dose,*" answer Ghisello, "if you will make yourself lord of Venice and get all those cuckold nobles cut in pieces I am prepared to help you." The tempter spoke to willing ears. A vast conspiracy was formed to make Faliero' despot of Venice. Secret meetings were held in the palace, and it was arranged that sixteen leaders should each prepare an armed force of forty men, who, however, were not to be told for what purpose they were wanted. On Wednesday, April 15th, a rumour was to be spread that the Genoese were in the lagoons, and the alarm-bell of St Mark's to be rung. The leaders with their men were to converge on the Piazza and cut down the nobles and influential citizens who would hasten to answer the call. Faliero was then to be acclaimed lord of Venice. To incite the people to hatred of the nobles, hired roysterers were sent by night about the city doing violence to and insulting the women of the people, calling each other by well-known names of nobles as they mockingly rioted through the streets. "But the Lord God who hath ever watched over this most glorious city," say Sanudo, "inspired Beltrame Bergamasco, one of the leaders, to go secretly to a beloved patron, Nicolo Lioni, and warn him as he valued his life not to leave his house on the 15th." Lioni's suspicions were aroused; he questioned Beltrame and finally locked him in a room while he went to seek Giov. Gradenigo, dubbed Nasone (big nose) and Marco Cornaro in order to take counsel together. They returned to Lioni's house and after again questioning Beltrame decided to send messengers with an urgent summons to the Ten and the chief Councillors and officers of the State to a meeting in the sacristy of S. Salvatore. Blanched with terror they hurried together. Up

to that time the complicity of the Doge was not known, but the immediate arrest of two other conspirators discovered the full danger of the situation. The Ten were equal to the emergency. The chief police officials and heads of the wards were sent for and asked to take good men and true, and arrest the leading conspirators. Armed forces were summoned from Chioggia. All means of egress from the palace were guarded; the bell-ringer forbidden to stir. On the dawn of the 16th the Ten summoned a *Zonta* of twenty of the wisest, best and most ancient of the nobles of Venice to join them in trying the Doge. He made no attempt to defend himself and was sentenced to death. On the 17th, the biretta removed, stripped of his ducal robes and clothed in a black gown, he was led to the spot on the landing of the staircase<sup>1</sup> in the courtyard where seven months before he had sworn to defend the Constitution. At one stroke his head was severed from his body. A *capo* of the Ten then went to the arcade of the palace over the Piazza and showed the executioner's bloody sword to the assembled people, crying: "The great judgment has been done on the traitor." The gates were opened and the people rushed in to see the body. At night all that remained of Marin Faliero was placed in a boat with eight lighted torches and carried to burial at S. Zanipolo. No record of the sentence is found in the acts of the Ten. On the unfilled space where the minutes should be entered are the words *N̄. Sēbatur*, "Let it not be written." A year later his portrait was blotted out and the place covered with a black veil with the inscription: *Hic est locus Marini Falietro decapitati pro criminibus*. . . Meanwhile the leaders of the plot as they were captured were hanged in a row, with iron gags in their mouths, from the columns of the palace. St Isidore's Day, April 16th, was made a public festival and as late as 1520 Sanudo saw carried in procession the white

<sup>1</sup> Not the present *Scala dei Giganti*, built two centuries later in a different position.



THE PALAZZI GIUSTINIANI AND FOSCARI

damask cloth bespattered with blood which was used at the execution.

On the 21st the vacant chair was filled by the election of Gradenigo *il nasone*, who had been largely instrumental in frustrating the plot. The Genoese negotiations dragged on, and not until the June following was the treaty of peace signed at Milan. Venetian statesmen had short rest from foreign complications. The defeat of Sapienza and the supposed laming of the executive by the miserable end of Doge Faliero, tempted the Hungarians, who were rapidly increasing in population and civilisation, to achieve their purpose of acquiring possession of a sea-board. War was declared and Francesco Carrara, who held Padua under Venetian tutelage, was called to aid his suzerain. But the Carraras aimed at founding a dynasty and gave secret assistance to King Louis of Hungary, who was besieging Treviso. The defence of Treviso and of Dalmatia was beyond the power of the Republic. After a two years' struggle and bitter hours of humiliation, Dalmatia, bought with so much blood of Doges, patricians and people, was surrendered by the peace of Zara, in February 1358, to the King of Hungary in exchange for the retention of Treviso. Meantime Gradenigo had died (in 1356) and left to Giov. Delfino the signing of the great renunciation. Delfino was stoutly defending Treviso when elected, and being refused a permit to pass the Hungarian lines broke through by night and met the Senate at Mestre. Broken-hearted, his sight failing, he died of the plague in 1361. Under Delfino's successor Lorenzo Celsi, Crete, never wholly subjugated, burst into revolt and terror reigned in the island. At this time Petrarch, seeking peace and security, had settled in Venice, the "only nest of liberty and sole refuge of the good." He lived simply, at the sign of the Two Towers on the Riva degli Schiavoni, where it was his delight to stand at his window watching the huge galleys, big as the house he lived in, and with masts taller than towers, passing and repassing. The poet, honoured and cherished,

was on intimate terms with the Signory and advised the employment of the famous Veronese *condottiero* Lucchino del Verme to subdue the island. On the 4th of June about the sixth hour the poet was at his window chatting with the Archbishop of Patras when the friends saw a galley gliding swiftly up the lagoons, her masts wreathed with flowers; her deck crowded with men waving flags; hostile banners trailed in the waters behind her. She brought the news that Lucchino, falling upon the insurgents, weakened by divided counsels, had defeated them and punished the leaders. A thanksgiving festival was ordered which lasted three days. "The Doge," writes Petrarch, "with a numerous train took his place to watch the sports over the vestibule of St Mark's, where stand the four bronze horses (a work of ancient and excellent art) that seem to challenge comparison with the living and raise their hoofs to tread the ground. An awning of tapestry in many colours kept off the heat of the sun and I myself was invited to sit by the right hand of the Doge." The great Piazza, the church, the Campanile, the roofs, the arcades, the windows, were a mass of people. A magnificent pavilion next the church was filled with more than four hundred gaily dressed ladies.

English knights took part in the jousts. The poet, bored by the length of the festivities, pleaded pressure of business on the second day and came no more. But the rejoicings were premature, the revolt soon flamed forth again, and a costly campaign of twelve months was needed to quench it. Petrarch, to show his gratitude to the Venetian State, offered to make over his great collection of books to found a public library if the Republic would house them. The procurators of St Mark accepted the charge, but the ultimate fate of this priceless gift is unknown. During the short and peaceful reign of Marco Corner, Guariento of Verona was employed to paint on the walls of the Hall of the Great Council the story of Alexander III. and Barbarossa, for which Petrarch composed inscriptions. In 1368 a deputation from the Great



Council headed by Vettor Pisani went in search of the procurator, Andrea Contarini, who had been chosen Doge, and found him grafting fruit trees on his farm by the Brenta. Contarini had been warned against accepting the Dogeship by a Syrian sooth-sayer, and threats of confiscation were necessary to force him from his retreat.

At the peace of Zara, Louis of Hungary had shielded Carrara from Venetian vengeance, but the erection of two forts on the Brenta now gave the Venetians a pretext for paying off old scores. Louis again stood by his ally until the lucky capture of the King's nephew by the Venetians enabled them to exact the abandonment of the war as the price of his ransom, and Carrara was made to pay heavily for disloyalty. Petrarch accompanied the Paduan peace envoys—a grateful task to the poet of peace and concord.<sup>1</sup> It was his last mission to Venice.

The final act in the struggle with Genoa now draws nigh. A quarrel for precedence took place at the Coronation of the King of Cyprus between the Venetian and Genoese envoys, Malipiero and Paganino Doria, in which the latter, "being full of anger and venom," made use of coarse and unseemly words towards the Venetians. The quarrel was renewed at the banquet that followed, and loaves of bread and other meats were used as missiles. The Cypriotes sided with the Venetians, and many of the Genoese present were flung out of the window and dashed to pieces. But it was a dispute for the possession of the classic Tenedos *notissima famæ insula* which made war inevitable. The Signory offered the Greek Emperor for the cession of the island (which by its position south of the Dardanelles was of great strategical importance) the sum of three thousand ducats and the return of the Imperial jewels which were held in pledge at Venice. The offer was made a demand by a threat to treat with the Turks if the Emperor refused the bargain. Paleologus had emptied his treasury to meet the

<sup>1</sup> " *P'vo gridando pace, pace, pace!*" *Canzone all' Italia.*

cost of the Ottoman wars, and accepted the offer. The Genoese retaliated by taking in hand Andronicus, the Emperor's rebellious and renegade son, who in return for their support promised to make them masters of the island. The islanders confronted by the rival claims, came forth bearing crosses in their hands to welcome the Venetians, and the Governor declared for St Mark. A Venetian garrison was accepted and an attempted landing by the Genoese was defeated with great slaughter. Each of the powers prepared for the struggle: Genoa by allying herself with the King of Hungary and the Carraras of Padua; Venice with Barnabo Visconti, lord of Milan, for the Milanese patronate of Genoa was of brief duration. Carlo Zeno, whose varied career and charmed life form one of the romances of history, was sent to harass the Genoese in the Mediterranean, and Vettor Pisani given command of the home fleet. After some minor successes Pisani was ordered by the Senate to go into winter quarters at Pola. While resting his exhausted crews and refitting his ships, the enemy appeared in the offing. Pisani, whose better judgment was overruled by the civil Commissioners, was compelled to give battle. Stung by a reflection on his courage he grasped a banner and led the onslaught, crying, "Who loves Messer S. Marco, let him follow me." Luciano Doria the Genoese admiral was slain, and victory inclined at first to the Venetians, but a clever feint broke their formation. The Genoese turned and the whole Venetian fleet, save six galleys that escaped to Parenzo, was annihilated. Pisani on his arrival at Venice was accused of defective scouting, impeached, and punished by degradation and imprisonment. Venice reeled under the blow. Zeno was far away. The enemy was reinforced by Pietro Doria's command, and for the first time during many centuries a hostile fleet swept down on the lagoons. But Venice never lost faith in herself or in her destiny. With grim determination she set her teeth and tightened her armour. The approved measures were taken to fortify the city and block the

channels. Messengers were dispatched to recall Carlo Zeno. A Franciscan friar was sent to learn the price of the King of Hungary's neutrality. But the Genoese and Paduan envoys at Buda were already singing the dirge of Venetian independence. A garrison was to be planted at St Mark's and a castle built at Cannareggio. Her inviolable bulwark the sea was to be breached and indomitable Venice chained by a causeway to the mainland. The attempt to detach the King from his ally failed. The miserable remnant of the fine fleet was entrusted to Taddeo Giustiniani, who to hearten the men decided to attack some Genoese galleys that were hovering off Lido. As he sailed forth, a prisoner leapt from one of the enemy's ships and swam towards the Venetian fleet. A Genoese bowman took aim and shot him in the head, but he pressed on, and when picked up warned his compatriots that the whole Genoese fleet under Pietro Doria was following. Giustiniani turned back, and his little armament was saved.

Doria had sailed into the gulph, burning Umago, Grado and Caorle. He turned towards the *lidi*, devastated Pelestrina, captured and utterly destroyed Chioggia *minore*, and prepared to attack Chioggia *maggiore*. On the mainland, the Hungarians had occupied important Venetian possessions; Treviso was besieged; Carrara, by strenuous engineering, had joined hands with his ally, and given Genoa a base on the mainland. On the 16th of August a general assault was made on Chioggia. The garrison fought bravely: Emo, their commander, with a handful of men resisted to the last. But he, too, was at length overpowered, and the banners of Genoa, Hungary and Padua floated over Chioggia. It was about midnight when the calamitous news reached St Mark's. The great bell was tolled, and under the gloom of the disaster it was decided to open negotiations with the enemy. But the offer of the Signory was haughtily rejected. "Ye shall have no peace," answered Doria, "until I have bridled S. Mark's horses." Venice prepared for a death-grapple with her adversary. The common peril evoked a noble enthusiasm.

Patrician offered to share the last crust with plebeian and fight shoulder to shoulder in defence of the fatherland. After an unsuccessful attempt to secure the services of Sir John Hawkwood, prince of *condottieri*, as Captain-General, the post was given to Taddeo Giustiniani. But the people, with finer insight, shouted for Vettor Pisani, under him alone would they fight. The Senate gave way. A great multitude welcomed his release from prison, and bore him in triumph to St Mark's, crying, "*Viva Messer Vettor Pisani.*" But their hero rebuked them, and bade them keep silence or shout, "*Viva Messer S. Marco.*" They only cried the more loudly, "Long live Vettor Pisani and St Mark! Long live Vettor Pisani our father." As he was borne along, his veteran pilot, Corbaro, shouted, "Now is the time to avenge thee, make thyself dictator." The answer was a blow from Pisani's clenched fist. From St Mark's to his house in S. Fantino, so great was the press of people that there was no place on the ground for a grain of millet seed. He reached home to find that his brother was dead, that his father, too, had gone to an obscure grave. On the morrow he went to the basilica to pray for divine aid, and after his devotions stood by the high altar, and made a *bellissima sermone* in the vulgar tongue to the people. With cries of "Galleys! galleys! arms! arms!" they streamed out to the Piazza. So great, however, was the disappointment when it became known that Pisani was to share the command with Giustiniani that the seamen refused to serve, and the Senate again gave way. The people's leader being assured them, enthusiasm knew no bounds. Everyone able to bear arms enrolled himself. A forced loan produced the magnificent sum of more than six and a quarter millions of lire. Gold and silver, jewels and precious stones were cast into the treasury; citizens stripped themselves even of the clasps of their garments. The Signory decreed the ennoblement after the peace of thirty families who should have contributed most in men and treasure to the State. Foreigners were offered citizenship. The Doge himself, seventy-two



SUNSET—MODERN VENICE.

years and all, reared his gonfalon of gold in the Piazza and decided to lead the armament. A new fleet was equipped: the fortifications strengthened. Meanwhile Doria planned to winter in Chioggia, and Pisani with daring and masterly resource determined to take the offensive and imprison the Genoese in the harbour. On the night of December the 21st, the Venetian fleet left its moorings, towing behind it great hulks filled with stones. Before dawn it had reached the channel of Chioggia. Five thousand men were disembarked on the tongue of land at Brondolo. They were soon attacked and forced by the Genoese to regain their ships. But the diversion had enabled Pisani to sink two of his hulks across the passage, and soon an insuperable barrier blocked the issue. Swiftly he turned under the very jaws of the Genoese cannon and succeeded in holding the enemy while his sappers dammed the channel of Brondolo. With equal skill and bravery the canal of Lombardy was choked, and Carrara cut off from his ally. In a few days every issue from Chioggia was barred, and Pisani hastened out to sea by the Porto di Lido to deal with any reinforcements that might be sent to raise the blockade. Slowly the dark, cold December days dragged on: the strenuous fighting, privation and hunger broke down the spirits of the Venetians. Some there were who murmured, saying, "rather than die here let us abandon Venice and migrate to Crete." But the Doge met them, drew his sword and swore that though on the verge of eighty he would die sooner than return defeated to St Mark's. The end of the year was at hand, a mutiny threatened, the Doge again appealed to them, and promised that if on January 1st Zeno had not been sighted, the blockade of Chioggia should be raised. On the morning of New Year's day anxious eyes scanned the seas. At length a watcher on St Mark's tower raised a cry. Fifteen sail were on the horizon. Was it invincible Zeno bringing salvation to Venice, or Genoese reinforcements bearing her doom? Some light, swift vessels were sent to reconnoitre. As they neared the squadron

St Mark's banner was run up on the foremost galley. The darkest hour had passed.

For six months after Zeno's arrival the Genoese held out, but there was never any doubt as to the ultimate result, and on June the 24th the Lion of St Mark again waved from the Tower of Chioggia.

Two Genoese fleets were, however, still at large. Pisani was sent to run them down and died of fever and wounds at Manfredonia.<sup>1</sup> Zeno took up the chase, but the Genoese successfully eluded their pursuers. It was the end of Genoa as a great maritime power. Even as Spain did in her struggle with England two centuries later, Genoa had entered on a contest which tried the nation beyond its powers. Hostilities on the mainland continued till, by the mediation of the House of Savoy, a congress met at Turin and a general treaty of peace was signed in August 1381. For three years no merchant ship had left Venice, yet she emerged from the contest stronger than ever, the acknowledged mistress of the seas.

In September 1381 the Great Council met to elect the thirty contributors to the success of the war, who were to be ennobled. The balloting lasted all day and great part of the night, and on the morrow the names were cried at the edict stones of the Rialto and St Mark's. Those thus honoured went each bearing a lighted taper in solemn procession to St Mark's, and the ceremony ended in popular rejoicings.

<sup>1</sup> The hero's statue and a Latin inscription from his tomb in the demolished church of S. Antonio are now in the Museum of the Arsenal.