

on the spot, and if the demand is brisk, the logs so lately the monarchs of the forest are confined in the hold of a ship, and on their way to Europe, where we need not follow them, as we all know their ultimate destiny.

It will be seen that the above species of industry must be necessarily speculative and expensive, and cannot be carried on without capital. It is calculated that the cost of a mahogany-cutting expedition amounts to about fourscore pounds per man employed, including all expenses of plant, cattle, etc. The profits, however, must be liberal, looking to the fact that there is generally a ready sale for the wood, and that the trees yield a large quantity. A single log has been known to weigh fifteen tons, and to yield over five thousand superficial feet. Latterly, the preference for walnut wood in articles of furniture has told injuriously on the value of the finer sorts of mahogany; this, however, is a mere freak of fashion, and, like other fashions, may be destined to but a brief existence.

### VENICE.

VENICE, the Queen of the Adriatic, once the head of a flourishing republic, in possession of extensive home and foreign dominions, figured for more than a thousand years among the independent states of Europe; and was for a time the mistress of the seas, a grand centre of commerce, a splendid temple of art, envied for wealth, feared and courted for power, renowned for statesmanship and public spirit, whose alliance was sought alike by Mohammedan and Christian governments. But for upwards of half a century, with the exception of a very brief interval, it has been simply a humiliated and melancholy city, the enthralled capital of an equally enthralled province, roughly trampled on by the heel of the alien. It is now deserted by half its proper inhabitants, rich only in emblems of past political greatness, decayed monuments and desolate palaces, while filled with military, cannon, spies, and police, coercing the native remnant, who burn with impatience to join the colours of a rejoicing nationality, and raise the shout of "Down with the Austrians!" "Freedom for Italy!" "Viva Garibaldi!" "Viva Victor Emmanuel!"

The position of the place is very remarkable, and its entire character is not less unique.

There is a glorious city in the sea.  
The sea is in the broad, the narrow streets,  
Ebbing and flowing; and the salt sea-weed  
Clings to the marble of her palaces.  
No track of men, no footsteps to and fro,  
Lead to her gates. The path lies o'er the sea,  
Invincible; and from the land we went,  
As to a floating city—steering in,  
And gliding up her streets as in a dream,  
So smoothly, silently—by many a dome,  
Mosque-like, and many a stately portico,  
The statues ranged along an azure sky;  
By many a pile, in more than eastern pride,  
Of old the residence of merchant-kings;  
The fronts of some, though time had shattered them,  
Still glowing with the richest hues of art,  
As though the wealth within them had run o'er."

Rogers, the writer of this pleasing description, did not anticipate that it would be rendered inaccurate.

It is so in one point, for the services of the gondola have been superseded by a railway-bridge, in the conveyance of passengers across the lagoon between the mainland and the city. This truly great work, completed in the year 1845, consists of 222 arches, extending nearly two miles and a quarter in length. It consumed in its construction 80,000 larch trees, 21,000,000 of bricks, and 176,000 cubic feet of stone. Thus fastened by a material link to the mainland of Italy, while connected with its population by the strong ties of blood, language, historical associations, and political aspirations, it is to be hoped that Venice will share in the better fortunes which have apparently dawned upon the rest of the peninsula. Approaching the bridge on the land-side, at a little distance on the left, close to the lagoon, stands the strong fort of Malghera, the fall of which, after being held by the popular party in 1848-9, terminated the insurrection of that period.

In all other respects the poetical description is correct. The salt water penetrates every district of the strangely situated city, for its buildings cover no less than seventy-two islands or shoals, and rest upon substructions of wood or stone. These islets were formed by the detritus brought down by the river in bygone ages, which was here arrested by the sea and deposited, as well as along other parts of the coast. Their separating channels are now canals, of which there are 147, crossed by 306 steep bridges. The canals are the great thoroughfares of the place, and answer the purpose of streets, while gondolas are substitutes for our carriages and cabs. There are indeed streets, properly so called, and every dwelling may be reached on foot. But they are not wider than twelve feet from house to house, and mostly much narrower, so that locomotion is chiefly carried on by water. But little occasion has the sight-seer to use his legs, at least out of doors, being afloat as soon as he leaves his hotel, and floated back to it again. Hence it has been said, that to enter Venice is literally to "go on board," with this difference from ship-board, that there is no danger of sea-sickness. The change of level in the water-streets, from the ebb and flow, is very regular, and amounts to a fall and rise of from two to three feet. But now,

"In Venice Tasso's echoes are no more,  
And silent rows the songless gondolier."

The well-known strain of the boatman, consisting of alternate stanzas from Tasso's "Jerusalem," passed away with the independence of the State; and though grand open-air music still daily salutes the ear, it finds no favour with the populace, proceeding from the military band of the dominant power.

The principal or grand canal, nearly 300 feet wide, lined with palaces, winds through the city in the form of the letter S, and divides it into two unequal portions. This is crossed by only one bridge, the steepest, largest, and finest, called the Rialto, from the name of the chief and first occupied island, on which it abuts. It is magnificently situated, and well seen from the front windows of adjoining hotels. The full style is *Ponte di Rialto*, just as

ILLUSTRATION ON PAGE 777.—1. The Bridge of Sighs. 2. The Grand Canal. 3. The Rialto. 4. Bird's-eye View of Venice. 5. The Ducal Palace. 6. The Cathedral of St. Mark.







we say Westminster or Southwark Bridge. Another of these structures revives mournful recollections:—

"I stood in Venice on the Bridge of Sighs,  
A palace and a prison on each hand."

It rises to an unusual height above a narrow canal behind the former palace of the doges, to which it served as a communication by a covered gallery with the public prisons. Over this bridge prisoners condemned to die were conducted to hear their sentences, and were then led off to execution. Hence the name. Some state dungeons, directly belonging to the old palace, are open to inspection, as if to inspire the visitor with a horror of despotism, whether administered by an individual or a body of patricians. They are hideous recesses in the walls, the lower tiers of which are quite dark. No light was ever allowed, and little elbow-room was afforded, for they are not more than five paces in length, two and a half in width, and seven feet in height. A wooden pallet, raised a foot from the ground, was the only furniture. A small hole in the wall let in the damp air of the passages, and admitted the food of the miserable captive. Verily, in the sorrows of modern Venice we have the sins of the fathers visited upon the children.

We are now in the heart of the city, at the prime centre of attraction, the spot which is usually first visited by the stranger, and to which he most frequently returns; for while singularly impressive or imposing objects are at hand, the site is open to the cool breeze from the Adriatic. The doge's palace was the actual residence of the chief magistrate down to the close of the sixteenth century, when it was exclusively appropriated to the offices of government. It contains the halls of the various councils of administration, in much the same state in which they were before the loss of independence. The building forms the east side of the Piazzetta, an oblong area opening into the Piazza, or great square of St. Mark. Here is the richly embellished church of the patron saint, with its lofty detached campanile, or bell-tower, and the celebrated bronze horses, obtained as plunder during the sack of Constantinople in the fourth crusade. Over beautiful pedestals elaborately ornamented in front of the church, three gonfalons of silk and gold once proudly waved to the breeze, symbolizing the triple dominions of the republic—Venice, Cyprus, and the Morea. The tricolor took their place, and speedily gave way to the standards of Austria. But we must not linger upon material aspects, having in view some historical jottings.

The republic of which Venice became the head antedated its existence as a city. The terror of two conquerors, separated from each other in point of time by some thirteen centuries, led to the rise and fall of the state. It began with Attila: it ended with Bonaparte. Flying from the arms of the ruthless barbarian, all the best families of Cisalpine Gaul betook themselves to the isles and shoals of the lagoons as a place of refuge, where for a time they had little food but fish, no wealth but their boats, and no merchandise but salt, which they began to exchange for provisions. They had their different magistrates, till anarchy induced twelve

principal men to propose the appointment of a single chief magistrate for life. This was carried by acclamation at Heraclea, A.D. 697, where Saul Anafesto, a citizen of that place, was saluted by the title of Doge, a corruption of *Dux*, duke. In 809, the seat of government was transferred to the Rialto, one of the isles of Venice; and from that period its rise as a great city may be said to date. Here, in the year named, Angelo Participazio was chosen doge. He was followed by seventy-one successors in the dignity down to October, 1797, when, by treaty signed in the mean house of a humble village, Campoformio, the conquering Bonaparte, after flattering the Venetians with the highest hopes, shamefully abandoned them to the rule of Austria. Manin, who closed the long line of doges, dropped senseless to the ground, when required to take the oath of allegiance to the German emperor, overwhelmed by the misfortune and disgrace of his country. Portraits of the doges, the early ones painted from fancy, form a long frieze round the hall of the grand council in the ducal palace. But there is one blank, where a black veil appears, with the well-known inscription, "Hic est locus Marini Falieri, decapitati pro criminebus." Exasperated by a personal insult, he entered into a conspiracy to murder the leading patricians, and was beheaded in 1355.

The head of the state was appointed for life, or during good behaviour, for many of the doges were very roughly handled. Out of about forty who succeeded each other in four centuries, nearly one half were either killed or blinded, or were compelled to abdicate, and banished. One who had made himself justly obnoxious, Pietro Candiano IV, underwent a terrible fate in 976. Assailed in the palace, he successfully resisted with his partizans the efforts of the besiegers to dislodge him, upon which they resorted to the expedient of smoking him out, by firing the next building. A tremendous conflagration ensued, in which he perished, and the first church of St. Mark was destroyed. Whatever of the popular element might originally mingle in the form of government was gradually and effectually excluded from it. For the last five centuries of the existence of the state, all power was in the hands of a patrician order, consisting of families rendered influential by wealth or numbers, or both, whose names were entered on the *Libbro d'Oro*, or roll of the Venetian aristocracy. They chose the grand council from among themselves; and from this body emanated the doge, his privy council, the senate, and the council of ten. These last constituted a supreme court for offences against the state, the members of which were renewed yearly. The proceedings were in secret, and the sentences were executed in secret. The sittings were held in a hall, in the ante-room of which, at the entrance, there was a lion's head, the terrible Lion's Mouth, into which the secret denunciations were thrown. It is impossible to conceive of machinery more directly calculated to secure the removal of personally obnoxious individuals, and thus minister to the gratification of private vengeance.

Upon a vacancy occurring in the chief magistracy, the grand council at first nominated twenty-four



persons for the office, who reduced their own number to eleven. These eleven repaired to the church of St. Mark, and there elected one of themselves by plurality of votes. The person chosen was then presented to the people, with the announcement, "This is the doge elect, if you approve of him." But such an appeal was a mere form, as the magnates immediately withdrew. The new doge was crowned on the platform at the top of the Giant's Staircase in the palace. He was then carried through the city seated on a throne, throwing gold and silver among the populace. If married, his wife, the dogress, was inaugurated with great splendour, at least down to the close of the sixteenth century. Clad in cloth of gold, and wearing a crown, she was conducted from her home in the state-galley, the Bucentaur; was saluted on landing with strains of music and peals of artillery; and was enthroned in the ducal palace, surrounded by her ladies, high festival closing the day. But it so happened that Pope Clement VIII sent one of the Venetian queens a golden rose blessed by himself; and, according to the laws of papal etiquette, this was a gift properly belonging to none but right regal personages. Upon this discovery being made, the senate took the alarm. They were ungallant enough to deprive the poor lady of her rose; and a heavy blow and discouragement was given to all aspiring dames in Venice, for thenceforth female coronations ceased.

For many centuries, ascension-days were grand gala times, when the city was eminently

"The pleasant place of all festivity,  
The revel of the earth, the masque of Italy."

Up betimes was the doge to act the part of a bridegroom. Attended by his greybeards, the councillors and senators, all dressed in scarlet and gold, he went on board his galley, trimmed for the occasion, drums and trumpets sounding. They proceeded in the direction of the sea; and near the entrance of the lagoon, the potentate formally espoused the Adriatic, by dropping a ring into the water. This ceremony, long before the last of the doges, had fallen into disuse.

"The spouseless Adriatic mourns her lord;  
And, annual marriage now no more renewed,  
The Bucentaur lies rotting unrestored—  
Neglected garment of her widowhood!

"St. Mark yet sees his lion where he stood,  
Stand, but in mockery of his withered power,  
Over the proud place where an emperor sned,  
And monarchs gazed, and envied in the hour  
When Venice was a queen with an unequal'd dower."

Time has rendered one portion of these lines incorrect. At the close of the last century, the revolutionists stripped the state vessel of its ornaments; and after having been used as a gun-boat and a prison, it perished by fire in 1824. A model of it is preserved in the arsenal.

The commencement of the fifteenth century was perhaps the most flourishing period in the history of Venice. Then the expiring Doge, Mocenigo, summoned the principal senators around his death-bed, and addressed them in remarkable words: "I leave the country in peace and prosperity. Our merchants have a capital of ten millions of golden

ducats in circulation, upon which they make an annual profit of four millions. I have reduced the public debt by four millions of ducats. We have 45 galleys and 300 other ships of war; 3000 merchant vessels, and 52,000 sailors; 1000 nobles with incomes varying from 700 to 4000 ducats each; eight naval officers fit to command a large fleet; a hundred others fit to command smaller squadrons; many statesmen, juriconsults, and wise men." At that time the arsenal or dockyard gave employment to 16,000 workmen, and presented the scene of activity which Dante sketched and strikingly applied in the "Inferno."

"As in the arsenal of Venice boils  
Tenacious pitch in winter, to repair  
The bark disabled by long watery toils;  
For since to venture forth they are afraid,  
One here a vessel builds, another there  
Caulks that which many voyages hath made;  
One strikes the prow, one hammers at the poop,  
One mends a main, and one a mizen sail,  
One shapes an oar, another twists a rope;  
So, not by fire beneath, but art divine,  
Boiled up thick pitch throughout the gloomy vale."

The arsenal, on the east side of the city, is two miles in circuit, surrounded with battlemented walls. It contains two large and two small basins, with dry docks, building slips, and the necessary workshops. From hence went out the vessels which took part in the triumphs of Chioggia and Lepanto. Here is preserved the armour of Henry of Navarre, sent by him as a present to the senate; and here is the monument to the memory of the last admiral, Angelo Emo, who caused the Venetian flag to be respected in the Mediterranean—one of the earliest works of Canova. The place now tells a tale of departed glory, being more of a storehouse and museum, than used for ship-building and launches.

The same tale is told by the condition of many a palace and many a long ennobled family. Embark in a gondola at the Piazzetta, and go up the grand canal. There on the left bank is the Foscari palace. This great family can be traced back to the ninth century. It attained patrician rank in the twelfth, when members of it were admitted to the Grand Council. In the fifteenth, Francesco Foscari became doge, and reigned for the long term of twenty-nine years. A fine portal at the principal entrance of the ducal residence was executed in his time; and his statue, kneeling before the lion of St. Mark, remained in connection with it down to the democratic outbreak in the last century, when it was destroyed. Being deposed on the ground of age and incapacity, the old man took the event so much to heart that he died on hearing the bell of St. Mark's toll for the inauguration of his successor. The Palazzo Foscari, a beautiful edifice, was soon afterwards built. There were sumptuous exhibitions of wealth in it, with balls, revels, and banquets, in 1574, when its owner became the host of Francis I of France. No other abode in Venice was deemed so fitting for the accommodation of royalty. But in the present century, the military authorities seized upon the palatial building for strategical reasons, turned it into an Austrian barrack, and rude Croats have bivouacked where a sovereign lodged. No representatives of the



family now remain, except in complete obscurity. Federigo Foscari, born exceedingly rich, died very poor in 1811; Domenico became an actor on the Italian stage; and Marianna married a coach-maker of Pordenone.

There is often mute eloquence in dead figures. Venice contained 140,000 inhabitants when the French entered under the flag of democracy, and handed them over to the Austrians. The population now scarcely exceeds 60,000, for the deaths have annually exceeded the births by nearly 1000, owing to the young and enterprising quitting the city, whenever it has been practicable, leaving the old at home to die by the sepulchre of their fathers. This invariably takes place to some extent or other wherever liberty and property have no adequate security—to say nothing of life—and public authority maintains a system of espionage in private society. It is not pleasant to have to hand over sixty per cent. of an income to an absolute government in taxation—just £600 out of £1000; nor congenial to high blood to have your stockings pulled off to see if there are any letters secreted in them; nor agreeable to think that your neighbour in the next *chair at the café*, so well dressed and obliging, so smooth-tongued and voluble, may be a spy of the police on the watch for an incautious expression; nor is it desirable to run the remotest risk, at any hour of the night or of the day, of being whisked off to some distant prison, without trial, or form of trial, or the mockery of a form, to live there for months upon the eight sous a day allowed by a paternal administration. Such things have happened to gentlemen of rank, lawyers of eminence, and other professionalists, whose incomes have of course ceased during their incarceration, and whose families have in the meanwhile been reduced to straits or beggary.

All well enough merely to visit Venice, especially to those who are art-smitten, fond of the mediæval, and happen to be there in spring, when there are no mosquitoes astir, or stench from the canals, as during the summer heats, and no bitterly cold winds from the snow-crowned Alps, as in the winter months. But even a visit at any season has now to many its foil. Clear and unclouded may be the vernal sky; delightful then the climate; and nothing more delicious than the evening scene, as you walk the mole, while the moonbeams sparkle on the water, and light up the tall campanile. But mark the artillery around ready to blaze away; and hark! tramp, tramp, tramp, comes every moment more distinctly upon the ear. It is the footfall of the guard, marching in long single file through the narrow streets, winding about with them like the interminable sea-serpent, every soldier with a musket, and every musket primed to do instant execution. We are quite content to bid to all such places a long and last good-bye, till, (as we sincerely hope will soon be the case with Venice,) they are under the government of laws which respect personal rights, and contemplate the public good, rather than the will of an absolutist Power. May the time soon come when, both as regards civil and religious liberty, "Italy shall be free from the Alps to the Adriatic."

## A TWILIGHT ADVENTURE.

AN APPARITION EXTRAORDINARY.

ABOUT the centre of a great dreary common, distant some three miles from the little town of C—, and just at the meeting-place of two footpaths, which may be traced far over the sombre waste by their weary whiteness, stand three lightning-scathed elms, battered and seared by fire and storm, barkless, livid, and ghost-like in the dim twilight. And oh! the oppressive solitude and silence of that spot at such an hour.

It was just when the twilight of a September evening lay deepest on the border-land of day and night, that my homeward path led me past the blasted elms. The friends I had just left were such as Percy, or Ritson, or Scott, would have loved to commune with—full of old ballad lore. Quaint old words, breathed in the soft sweet voice of the mistress of the house to a quaint old melody, still rang in my ears. And this was the burthen that haunted me:—

"As I was walking a' alone,  
I heard twa corbies makin' a mane;\*  
The one unto the t'other did say,  
Where sall we gang and dine the day?"

The words of the ballad were well enough remembered, and I was trying to recall the air; but the fourth line baffled me. I could not get it to run rightly at all, and in vain did I repeat over and over,

"Where sall we gang and dine the day?"

in different keys, now higher and now lower—

Wholly intent upon this vexatious interruption to my musical reveries, I drew near to the goblin trees, and, for aught I know, might have passed them unnoticed, had not my little dog Trot, who was trotting quietly on, nose to ground, as was his wont, a yard or two in advance, suddenly stopped short in my way, so that I almost stumbled over him, and he then slunk cowering at my heels. At the same moment there reached my ears a faint rustle as of footsteps through the heather, or perhaps merely the rush of a startled rabbit into the gorse. But be this as it may, ye lovers of the marvellous, what a spectacle met my eyes, as then for the first time I lifted them to the blasted elms!

From a huge broken limb of the central tree depended an object that bore the semblance of a living creature, yet altogether unlike any that I had ever seen or read of. It loomed out from the dark background of cloudy sky, likest to one of those vast vampires which travellers have described as sometimes seen in the depths of the South American forest. Like them, it hung by the hind feet to the branch, swaying slowly to and fro. But then it was white—a livid white, like that of the barkless tree—white head, and body, and legs, and wide-extended wings. The wind, too, wafted from it a ghoulish odour, indescribable, that told a tale of fresh-spilt blood.

Confess, now, candid reader, long you not, as I did, to know something more of the monster; to be rid of such a night-mare of doubt; to be able to

\* "I heard two crows making a moan."