

among the lagoons of the Adriatic, intersected by salt water channels whose banks are lined with picturesque palaces, traversed at all hours by gliding gondolas, glorious with gems of Gothic and Renaissance, replete with color, famous in history, is magnificent beyond expression. He who has not seen both has missed much of this world's purest pleasure; he who has seen them longs again to visit them.

Venice is no longer decaying, neither is she flourishing. No longer the proud city, chief of many lands and many isles, no longer mistress of the seas, shorn of her commerce and of her merchant princes, she still holds a place among the largest cities of Italy, and derives an income from the myriads of strangers who flock to view the relics of her past magnificence. The palaces upon the grand canal are for the most part no more the residences of nobles. The Palazzo Crimani is the Hotel de Ville, the Palazzo Gritti is occupied by Salviatti's glass factory, the Fondaco dei Turchi is the Civic Museum, the Palazzo Ferri is a hotel, the Palazzo Dandolo a cafe, the Palazzo Foscari a school of commerce, the Palazzo Farseth the municipal hall, the Palazzo Manin the national bank, the Palazzo Cavalli the German consulate, and so on throughout almost the whole of the two long lines of mansions.

Still the black gondolas glide softly along the canals, propelled by the creak gondoliers; and still beauty, especially English-speaking beauty, loves to be rowed around on moonlit eves, listening to the songs of sweet but mercenary singers in lantern-lighted barges; but another claimant for public favor, the steamboat, now dashes along from pier to pier, and is extensively patronized at all hours by the Venetians as well as by their visitors. However traversed, whether in the gondola or the steamer, the Grand Canal presents through all its length a continuous panorama which is indelibly graven on the memory. Palace after palace, this Lombardic and round-arched, that with gothic tracery framed into gorgeous panels, the next with the stately columns of the best period of the renaissance, pass rapidly before the eye in a bewildering succession of magnificence, and then we land opposite the Dogane, traverse a narrow street, and emerge from the porticos of the grand piazza into a full view of that most fantastic yet most impressive of cathedrals, a Byzantine church in a Latin city, San Marco. To the right the campanile rises tall and straight, no great beauty, and capped with a positively repulsive upper story, but its faults are scarcely noticed in the presence of the arches of St. Mark's, which frame in the broad end of the ascended piazza. The wild horses, spoils of Constantinople, the solemn mosaics, the wondrously varied capitals, the richly tinted materials dazzle and charm the beholder out of criticism into admiration, and, as he advances, the glories of the majestic arcades of the Ducal Palace dawn upon his sight, and he is led on down the Piazzetta to the water

edge, past Sansovino's loggio and library, between the columns of San Marco and San Teodoro, until he takes in the angular view of that much-criticized yet ever-admired residence of the Doges. With all her grandeur Paris has nothing to offer that can compare with Venice. The quay-girt Seine, in spite of the vast piles of edifices which line its banks, has none of the charm of the Grand Canal, and the huge "places" of la Concorde and of the Bastille utterly lack the poetry of the Piazza di San Marco. San Marco itself is small compared with Notre Dame de Paris, a baby compared to St. Peter's at Rome, yet it makes upon the mind a much deeper impression than either. The mosaic-covered domes and walls, a historical museum of glass mosaic from the ninth to the sixteenth century, the walls, pavements, piers, columns, statues, of choicest and rarest marbles glowing with the richest colors, the fantastic variety of the carving and adornments make up a whole so grandly weird that it can never be forgotten. San Marco has been so written about, so endlessly photographed and chromolithographed, so repeatedly painted in every aspect, that a visitor does not expect to be charmed or surprised, and is astonished to find that he is both. If anything could take away the attraction of this remarkable church, it would be the constant stream of strangers that inunates its aisles, and the provoking swarms of guides who will never permit any man or woman not of Venice born to enjoy a moment's peace.

Notwithstanding Mr. Ruskin's comparison of St. Mark's to a vast cave, and his rhapsody about narrow phosphoric streams of light, and feeble gleamings reflected by polished walls, the openings around the domes of the roof, aided by such other light as enters by doors and windows, cause the interior to be better lighted, even on a rainy day, than the majority of Italian churches. Fortunately there is no possibility, or at least there exists no facilities to diminish the quantity of light which enters from the domes—if there were, doubtless the priests, who in the interiors of their churches certainly love darkness, would shroud the gold mosaics in a dimness as intense as that which pervades most of the churches of Rome. As it is, most of the figures and subjects can be made out tolerably well from the pavement, but a tour round the gallery affords a better idea of their magnificence. Tintoretto has contributed some of his best work to this interior, and Sansovino has adorned the chances with bas-reliefs and statues, yet their work is but an infinitesimal portion of the grand whole, and somehow the older, ruder work looks grander. The histories of the creation, flood, Joseph, and Moses, wrought in primitive fashion upon the dome and arches of the vestibule, may at times provoke an irreverent smile from a visitor who examines them in detail, yet the general effect is imposing. It will not do to inquire too rigidly, either within or without the church, the pur-

pose of each individual column. Many of them have no purpose save that of exhibiting a rich material and an intricately sculptured capital, yet all find their place in the picture, and an absentee would be missed. The entire structure is an example of the triumph of art over the rule of architectural criticism. Designed as a purely Byzantine structure, San Marco was completed externally as a Gothic one, and ostentates upon the upper portion of its facade all the floral detail of the Venetian manner, yet none but an architect would notice where the one style ends and the other begins. The mosaic upon the half-dome of the facade to the left hand of the spectator shows the original design, and shows that the columns in the central window of the upper story, though they now bear nothing, were originally designed to carry arches, the tympanum being filled in, not as now, entirely with glass, but partly with stonework.

The Ducal Palace—whence comes the charm of its exterior? The heavy upper story, overweighting to the eye the slender arcades beneath, has been many times adversely criticised, and cannot by the greatest admirer of the building be called beautiful in itself. Yet the lower stories seem to owe much of their beauty to the incubus which rests upon them. A third range of arcading would not improve the exterior, and the arcades alone would have no magnificence. It is the effect of contrast. The continuous line of arcades and quatrefoils gains variety from the central openings of the superimposed work, and lightness from the solidity of the walling piled upon them. The lower series of arcades is too low, it has the appearance of having sunk downwards some five feet into the lagoon; the insufficiently pierced upper lofty story is too high and too heavy; the terminal balustrade, with its gilded balls stuck upon iron pins, is ridiculous; and yet the entire facade is a thing of beauty that wins praise from the most critical, and charms those who are most inclined to carp at the arrangement of its solids and voids.—*The American.*

The Ancient Art of Embalming.—In view of modern progress in embalming, dessication and other methods of preserving the dead for an indefinite time, it is interesting to note that it has been estimated that more than 400,000,000 human mummies were made in Egypt from the beginning of the art of embalming until its discontinuance in the seventh century. There were three grades of embalming. For preserving his relatives in the most approved style the Egyptian had to pay \$1,225; in the second grade the operation cost about \$375; the third method was so cheap as to be considered within the reach of the poorest citizen, and involved the pickling of the body for some days, and then a boiling in bitumen. These mummies are devoid of hair and eye-brows, and are black, heavy, dry and very hard to break.