

Venice and the Venitians.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

By Rev. L. M. Colfelt D. D.

VENICE.

The Greek story of Eos or Aurora, goddess of the morning, falling in love with Tithonus has been told by Tennyson in one of his stately poems. Tithonus asked for immortality and Aurora, in preferring the request of Jupiter, omitted to add eternal youth as well and so the beautiful dream of love and happiness was dissipated as wrinkles and gray hairs came on apace. Tithonus became sick of cruel immortality and longed that the gift should be recalled. Men came and tilled the fields and slept beneath them. The swan died after many a summer and while Tithonus, no longer glorious in his beauty went roaming about the silent places of the East like a shadow of a dream. The condition of Venice approximates to that of Tithonus. The Doges celebrated the espousal of the city with the Adriatic in gondolas covered with brocade and moved by golden oars and Venice was endowed with immortality but she forgot to ask for everlasting youth and prosperity. Already she is gray-haired. Her very Doges have long since disappeared and if they ever return in spirit, it is to haunt the deserted marts and mourn the absence of all the former glory. The pearly crowns, the robes of velvet, the gilded barges, those lions of bronze with their eyes of diamonds, those crocodiles of emeralds and rubies, those splendid banquets immortalized by Paul Veronese, are all departed and the city sits desolate upon her islets with a double crown of rushes and sea-weed upon her brow. The marble palaces remain but like brilliant apparel on a hideous woman, they only render the decadence of her citizens more apparent. In these self-same palaces, the stint and beggary of "Wolfs Crag" is almost universally prevalent. There are marble floors and tables with rich mosaics but empty dishes. The representation of the Merovinis, the Paleros, the Contarines and many other families whose names appear in *Libra D Ora* still live in their old family palaces but their incomes are wholly drawn from small estates on the mainland. Others like the De Mulas who were once so rich that a law was passed in the days of the Republic, forbidding them to buy more houses and palaces are next door to paupers now. Their country homes are almost unfurnished and in their town palaces they have one or two rooms finely adorned where they receive visitors. Their food they manage to wring out of their peasants on the Metager system. Their main expenditure is a gondolier, who is the man of all work when not rowing. No matter how small the income a small portion of it is hoarded. To such an extent is this old, gentlemanly parsimony carried that when they receive their friends on their weekly reception days the lady of the house rings the bell and orders the gondolier to bring in the coffee. He appears with the coffee-pot and cups. The hostess waves her hand and says, "No one will take coffee" on which the guests bow for they know from their own experience at home that this coffee is but a complimentary myth, there being neither coffee in the pot nor sugar in the bowl. Beyond this the hospitality of a Venetian patrician never goes. But if an English visitor establishes himself in the city and invites these nobles to dinner we have been assured that they have the capacity of a camel gorging himself for a voyage across the desert of Sahara. From this degradation of her noblest citizens let us turn to historic Venice, to these noble children of her ancient household who conquered fatality, and saving themselves in the lagoon from the irruptions of Attila and his ferocious Huns, preserved the liberties of the race through the whole of the middle ages, who struggled with the waves and awakened the energies of commerce when society was uselessly hiding in cloisters, who terrified the Turks with their standards and drove back fatalism with its devouring career, who had the Imperial Crown of Byzantium so often in their hands but repelled by the Phryian cap of the older Republic, who chiselled palaces of marvellous sculpture, painted pictures with palettes to which the rainbow had lent its colors, who decorated monuments of singular beauty and majesty—in fine, who built a city which modern Venetians are incompetent even to inhabit—a city on whose bronze and marble are preserved the finest remains of the three ancient civilizations, the Asiatic, the Greek and the Roman, lost everywhere else in a complicate series of shipwrecks. With such a grand past and ignoble present we often think it had been better if Venice had not been endowed with immortality but had in the beginning of her decay flung herself like Ophelia into her lagoon and disappeared under her own waters forever. A tragic ending with a curse upon her lips had been noble far than this life of a mendicant showing contentedly to the world the bones of her former prosperity which are covered with naught but the tatters of pride!

The production of mosaics employs a large number of the people of Venice. This art was discovered by an artist whose industry Pliny qualifies with the term of importunum ingenium. The invention is probably due to the Persians from whom it passed to the Greeks and thence to Rome in the latter years of the Republic. It was patronized by the various Popes until the 14th century when Venice became the school of the art. St. Sophia at Constantinople and St. Peter at Rome present famous specimens of mosaic painting. But it was Titian who perfected the art when he had the direction of the mosaic decoration of St. Marc and caused the imitations of his own immortal paintings to be executed.

ed. The mechanical part of the art consists in uniting small pieces of variously colored marble so that the surfaces may have the effect of a painting. The fragments of marble, colored glass, or stones which are made use of, vary in size. They take every angular form which will suit the artist's purposes in working out the contour of the design and at the same time enable him to join them without the least interval. The artist prepares a ground of plaster, formed of chalk and marble-powder mixed with gum. The stucco thus prepared is spread upon the surface intended whether it be a church wall or a piece of jewelry. On this plaster the artist sketches the outline of the design and then with infinite pains inserts the small bits of marble in the stucco, arranging them so as to give the light and shade and the various tints. The process ends with polishing the whole surface with very fine sand and water and the artist's labor is complete.

Venice is a series of monuments, a wonder of wonders in the variety and richness of its architecture. Everywhere there is prodigality and freedom of method and over every style is flung the rich jewels of the East. If you examine the Venetian palaces with a square and compass, demanding of them obedience to a rigid mathematical harmony, then you will be shocked by the sight of a gallery supported by iron and a heavy column placed upon a slender one as if denying the general principle of gravity; you will be indignant at the spectacle of a mass of marble weighing like a mountain and riding a light, aerial gallery with its delicate bracing; but then if you can fling mathematics into the lagoon and laugh at laws of proportion and remember that Venice was born of peculiar historical circumstances and was a transition city between the civilization of the East and the West, you will recognize that this architecture is not only suitable but is unmatchable in the wealth of its expression, the richness of its hyperbole and the variety of its effect.

The Church of St. Mark resembles nothing else in the world. The broad and low front is divided into five arcades not unlike the arches of a bridge and the entrances are formed by five gates of bronze. Stretching across the whole front is a ballustraded gallery and in this are placed the four famous bronze horses which were founded at Corinth, removed to Athens, served to adorn the triumphal arches of Nero and Trojan at Rome, accompanied Constantine to Byzantium, transported in the 13th century from Constantinople to Venice, and lastly under the government of the first Napoleon, placed in the carrousel in Paris only to be returned to their present position in 1815. Language has no words with which to paint so rich and unique a picture as this Basilica, covered with all orders of architecture; Oriental, Gothic, Greek, Byzantium, Moorish—an epitome of all epochs, its blue arches sown with stars, its columns of varicolored jasper, its mosaics in the recesses, its cupolas above copies of St. Sophia, like apparitions of Asia, and its grand altar brought with the bronze horses from Constantinople.

Next in interest is the massive palace of the Doges in Moorish style, resting its mass of red and white marble in a double gallery of arches interlaced with capricious orioles which harmonize with the diadem of sharp triangles and the airy belfry above. Around the balcony are colossal statues of the Doges and the men who epitomize Venetian history. Here is a library of 150,000 volumes and thousands of manuscripts. Venice is the mother of Titian and in these galleries and on the ceilings and walls are the masterpieces of Titian, Paul Veronese, Corregio, and Alberti. Further on is the great banquet hall adorned with battle scenes, where, in cups of crystal in bacchanalian feasts and sensuous songs the Doges and Patricians celebrated the glories of the Republic in the richest fashion of the Renaissance. Still deeper in the heart of the Palazzo is the room of Justice, where sat the Council of Ten, with its traditions of traitors and dungeons, of the Bridge of Sighs and tragic stories to excite the imagination, half legendary no doubt, but in many instances only too historically true. The Palace of the Doges, like the Seraglio of Constantinople, has been more than once stained with the heads of victims exposed on the outer balustrades and proves that an aristocracy armed with Republican laws can be as sanguinary as a despotism armed with the Ottoman scimitar.

The fine portal of St. Mary of Nazareth, the Peristyle of St. Simon, the noble architecture of St. Roche, Santa Maria della Salute with its graceful tower and great globe of gilded bronze, the palace of Sansovino, like a work of Cellini, San Giorgio with its red and white marble, the Gudeccia in all the colors of the rainbow, San Lorenzo with its Armenian convent and oriental towers like the curled sail of a large vessel, all are worthy of examination by the stranger.

At the eventide we took our last view of peculiar, beautiful Venice. The heavens were of turquoise blue, the banks of sand were tinged with gold, the houses on the islets were bright and many colored and the sun, sinking behind the lagoon, gilded with his last splendors the spires of the churches and the great domes. The sombre gondolas skimmed the waters like fantastic creatures born of the night and in the distance were the islands and between their foliage, glimpses of stately buildings enamelled by the arts and anchored in a sea of eternal poetry. Now arose the first stars of the evening and now the first lights appeared in the windows of the city. The songs of the gondoliers sounded on the sweet air and mingled with the vesper hymns of the cloister, the serenade to earth blending with prayer to the heavens!

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UTILITY EXECUTIVE DIES.

Mr. Albert M. Lynn, president of The West Penn Electric Company and a director of the American Water Works and Electric Company died at the Roosevelt Hospital, New York City, April 8, 1927, at 1:00 P. M. in the fifty-second year of his age after a long illness.

For over thirty years he had been identified in important executive capacities with the public utility properties of the American Water Works and Electric Company.

Mr. Lynn was born in Indianapolis, Indiana, on October 12, 1875, moving with his family to Pittsburgh in 1889, where he attended public schools. On February 1, 1893, he entered the employ of the American Water Works and Guarantee Company, the predecessor of the American Water Works and Electric Company, serving for some years in the general offices at Pittsburgh. He then became manager of the Company's water works plant at Chattanooga, Tennessee, and later of that at Birmingham, Alabama. For many years thereafter he was in charge of a large proportion of the Company's water works properties.

In 1917 he was elected president of The West Penn Company and upon the organization of The West Penn Electric Company he became its President in which capacity he was serving at the time of his death.

Among his associates and throughout the large territory served by the properties of which he was the head, Mr. Lynn was noted for the great energy and attention which he devoted to his work.

Mr. Lynn, who resided in the city of Pittsburgh is survived by his widow, nee Miss Ethel Sharpe, of Birmingham, Alabama, and one son, Henry Sharpe Lynn, now a senior at Princeton University; also by his mother, Mrs. P. A. Lynn, a sister Miss Clara Lynn and four brothers, William H., H. Ross, Arthur M., and Lawrence.

APPROPRIATION COMMITTEE STRONG FOR STATE COLLEGE

During the past two weeks the subcommittee of the House Appropriations committee made an inspection trip throughout the State, visiting all of the State-aid institutions, and in their report submitted on Tuesday had the following strong recommendations in favor of adequate appropriations for both State College and the Rockview penitentiary:

"There is no place that need of new buildings is more apparent than at State College. The Commonwealth, through its Legislature and the Executive, have neglected this institution for many years to the benefit of other colleges and universities, and at the present time many of the buildings in which the young men and the young women are being educated at State College, are inadequate and unsafe.

"The possibilities for the young men and the young women at State College are almost inconceivable, but they are being hampered year after year because the Commonwealth has neglected to perform its duty to the college.

FARM IMPROVEMENT URGED.

Most of the State institutions have quite a large acreage and most of the institutions have a dairy farm and raise their own pork and poultry. We believe that all of the farms, however, can be greatly improved if the plan were systematized and had some one in close touch with the different institutions who could advise on this subject, and in this respect your committee, is convinced that the farm at Rockview can be so operated that efficient foods could be raised and canned at this institution to take care of many of the other State institutions. "There are 6300 acres connected with this institution. Your committee further believes that a great amount of the beef could be fed upon this acreage and furnished to the different State institutions.

"In addition to the above your committee recommends that the main cell building at Rockview should be completed as early a date as possible. This would take care of 500 more prisoners, and that as soon as possible another cell building be erected which would take care of a thousand more prisoners, making a total of 1500 prisoners.

"This would entirely relieve the congestion at the Eastern and Western Penitentiaries and would also relieve the necessity of a new Eastern Penitentiary. This would also give the warden at Rockview 1500 more men out of which he could select a sufficient number to operate the farm and raise sufficient food of different kinds, much of which could be canned and furnished to the other State institutions.

—"Is the motor-car an asset to the church?" inquires a religious paper. Well, of course, it brings a good deal

of business to the churchyard.—The Western Christian Advocate.

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