

**TITIAN. A ROMANCE
OF VENICE, IN THREE
VOLUMES, VOL. III**

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Titian. A romance of Venice, in three volumes, Vol. III by R. Shelton Mackenzie

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TITIAN.

A ROMANCE OF VENICE.

BY

R. SHELTON MACKENZIE, LL.D.

"Che non avea creduto che l'arte potesse giungere a tanto, e che solo Tiziano era degno del nome di Pittore."

MICHAEL ANGELO.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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1843.

TITIAN.

CHAPTER I.

D'ALVAINE'S TRIUMPH IN THE BUCENTAUR.

A dying Glory smiles
O'er the far times, when many a subject land
Looked to the winged Lion's marble piles,
Where Venice sate in state, throned on her hundred isles.

BYRON.

THE Emperor Maximilian was unable to carry on, in person, the war he had successfully commenced in Friuli. Leaving orders for his troops to proceed towards the Trevisan, (which, in fact, would bring them closer to Venice), he hurried back to Inspruck, to pawn his jewels and use his very scanty credit, in order to raise

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money for the payment of his troops. Meanwhile, on the first intimation of his irruption, D'Alvaine hastened to Friuli—found the Imperialists in the Valley of Cadore—seized the mountain-passes, by which alone they could retreat—forced them, in very desperation, to risk a contest—and, after a battle which continued some hours, so signally defeated them, that Navagero doubted whether a single one of Maximilian's soldiers escaped with life. Of that victory, one of the most decisive in the annals of Venice, Titian was an eye-witness, and fifteen years after, it became the subject of one of his most eminent paintings, at the command of the Seigniory.

The progress of D'Alvaine, from the victory of that day, was marked by a rapid succession of the most brilliant achievements. He recaptured the Castle of Cadore—recovered Portonavone and Cremonza—carried the town of Goritz, after a few days' siege—became master of Trieste, the Emperor's principal port in the Adriatic—followed up his success by the

capture of Portonone, and the burning of Fiume, in Croatia—and passing by the Alps, took Possonia, a town on the borders of Hungary. While sustaining such reverses, Maximilian was traversing Germany, in the vain attempt to raise money for the prosecution of the struggle. The Venetians were inclined to carry the war into Germany, but Trivulzio, who commanded the French auxiliaries, knew that his master wished to conciliate rather than irritate the Emperor, and declined undertaking more than was necessary for the defence of the Venetians. At last, Maximilian proposed a truce with Venice, and after some negotiation the Seigniorie acceded to it.* This ended the

* In the first instance, Venice declined treating for peace separately from her ally, the French King. He broke off the negotiation, by insisting that the Duc of Gueldres, (a minor power with whom Venice had neither connexion nor community of interests), should be included. Upon this, Venice made a three years' truce with the Emperor—wishing to put an end to a war which was wholly confined to their own dominions, and to establish themselves in possession of the towns conquered for them by D'Alvaine. The truce was agreed to on April 20, 1508, and was immediately ratified by the two contracting parties.

war. Petigliano returned to Venice, thanked, rather coldly, for his services during the campaign, while for D'Alvaine was reserved the very eminent but unusual honour of a triumphal reception in the Bucentaur—an honour hitherto reserved, with very rare exceptions, for Princes.

There are a great many holidays observed throughout Italy, but in Venice, besides these religious solemnities, several political festivals were celebrated with considerable pomp, to perpetuate national traditions of which the people had become proud, or to preserve the memory of glorious deeds. None was attended with greater eclat than the bridal of the Adriatic, and the triumphs achieved by D'Alvaine, were considered worthy a public testimony, of which that festival should furnish the precedent. Nor could it have taken place more opportunely than on the Anniversary of St. Mark, (supposed to be the especial patron of Venice), amid the rejoicings of Easter week, and only five days after the truce was con-

cluded between the Seigniory and the Emperor.

Early in the morning of St. Mark's day, the discharge of cannon from the Arsenal, and the ringing of the bells in the six *sestieri*, or wards of the city, gave the expected signal for the Bucentaur to be towed to the quay in front of the Ducal palace. The Bucentaur, as is generally known, was a galleas of great size, blazing with gold, rich in carvings, exquisitely painted, elaborately inlaid, profusely ornamented, and of antiquity coeval, at least, with the donation of the Sovereignty of the Adriatic from Pope Alexander III to the Doge Sebastian Ziani, under whom the Venetian fleet had signally defeated that of the Emperor Frederick I, the most constant, unrelenting, and better enemy that Pontiff ever had.* Others,

* This was in 1177, and the naval fight took place off the Istrian coast. Otho, the Emperor's son, commanded the Imperial fleet, and was among the prisoners. On the return of Ziani, the Pope received him at the Lido, and presented

more anxious to shew the antiquity of the custom, than strictly to adhere to fact, affected to fix a much earlier date for it, and stated that traces of it could be found in Dandolo's Chronicle, under the reign of Pietro Urseoli II, towards the close of the tenth century. The vessel which was first made use of when this ceremony was instituted, is said to have borne the figure of a Centaur in the stern, and the prefix of the particle *Bu*—signifying Great, in the Venetian dialect of the time—was added, to distinguish the vessel subsequently employed

him with a golden ring. "Take this ring," said he, "and take with it, on my authority, the Sea as your subject. Every year, on the return of this happy day, you and your successors shall make known to all posterity that the right of conquest has subjugated the Adriatic to Venice, as a spouse to her husband!" The origin of this ceremony was questioned only once by a future Pontiff. In 1510, Julius II asked Jerome Donati, the Venetian Ambassador, where this grant of Pope Alexander's was to be found. "It is written," was the reply, "on the back of the Donation of Constantine." The arms carried by Ziani at the battle in which Otho was captured, were preserved in the Arsenal for more than six hundred years.