

Volume Second

Journal of Trip to Europe & return by J.M.Van Osdel & Family

1874. Venice.

Oct. 29th. Continued from first volume. Visited the church of St. Rocco. Found numerous pictures by Tintoretto. The church is adjoined by the School of St Rocco. This is a large building with a very fine architectural front. In the Council hall of the brotherhood are some very large and interesting paintings.

Oct. 30th. Purchased photographs. Took a gondola and passed round the entire city, returning by the Grand Canal to our hotel. Besides these regular trips of sight seeing, we made in the interim many short excursions on foot to the Rialto bridge and across the same. In and around the church of St. Mark, this singular building, the most noted structure in Venice, is of Byzantine or Oriental style of architecture, has 5 large domes, was designed by some Oriental architect and looks like a Turkish Mosque. It has about 500 cols. of marble placed every where. The general appearance of the building is not pleasing, violating, as it does, every known rule of correct architecture, symmetry, and arrangement. There are 4 large Bronze horses over the principal portal which Napoleon carried off to France and were afterwards returned. The church is very old, was erected about A.D. 1000. One very amusing sight in Venice is the large flock of pidgeons [sic] that frequent the grand public square. They are all of one colour, dark blue, and are so tame that they will alight on your fingers and pick up crumbs or grains of wheat held in your hand. Sometimes in crossing the square you are obliged to kick them out of your way. The palaces on each side of the Grand Canal are numerous. Some of them make a very imposing appearance, but the majority of them are failures architecturally. There is very little business done except to entertain strangers. This, once the most flourishing commercial city in the world, is now dead "and stinketh." The haughty Doges and wealthy merchants have gone forever, but the monuments of their pride and prosperity remain gloomy and deserted. It is saddening to pass around this city and reflect upon its former power and its present poverty.

Fair Venice,
Thou sittest like a Swan,
Upon the broad Lagoon.
Thou had'st an early dawn,
And a most brilliant noon.
But, thy meridian passed,
Three centuries ago.
The evening came at last,
And now thou'rt weak & Low.

Oct 31st. Left Venice at 2:35 P.M. Arrived at Bologna 6:10. Found pleasant rooms at Hotel Brun.

Nov. 1st. Sunday. Took carriage, drove to Campo Santo, an old monastery now converted into a place of burial. Found four large courts surrounded by arcades. In these arcades are numerous