

A Picturesque Burano

by Dr. Habberton Lulham

Bulls or Bears

By OSWALD EASTWOOD

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AN OLD WOMAN OF BURANO

HOUSANDS of travelers hopefully seek Venice yearly, their imaginations long fed by the painters and poets who have pictured the beautiful city in hues and terms which, though it may be true to their own highly cultivated senses, tend to bring no little disappointment to the ordinary beholder. For Venice, but too often, proves to the latter not quite the fairy Venice of his visioning, his chief disappointment being, perhaps, its lack of those glowing colors which he has been led by books and picture galleries to expect. And nowadays this falling short of his ideal is increased by the vulgarizing effect of the penny steamboat—the vaporetto, with which the Venetians seem so contented—that sets his gondola rocking as it passes, and stirs up that in the sleeping canal waters which had better been left lie; to say nothing of the motor-boat, which is threatening to do for the gondola what the "taxi" is doing for our hansoms at home.

If such a traveler be leaving Venice with a sense of disappointment, let him by no means depart till he has visited the fisher island of Burano; for, if he but choose his day and hour well, he will assuredly take home with him a satisfying picture of one spot at least, glowing with color and teeming with a picturesque life, that has outrun his most hopeful imaginings.

There can be few more pleasant experiences on a fine, warm afternoon in spring or autumn—in early May or mid-September for choice—than to take a gondola, with two good rowers, and win one's first sight of Burano.

A gondola it must be, not the vaporetto, that one may arrive alone or with a well-chosen companion, and not as one amongst a crowd of chattering, sight-seeing snapshots.

The way to Burano one through about six miles of lagoon landscape to the eastward of Venice. The island is situated about five miles northeast of Venice, in northern Italy. The chief industries of the people are market gardening, building of boats and fishing; the women are employed principally in lace-making. The island of Torcello also belongs to Burano. It is located on an adjacent isle and the principal attractions that would interest travelers are the two museums of antiquities and the cathedral, which was built in the seventh century and was rebuilt during the year 1008. This cathedral contains many valuable mosaics.

It is a populous little place, with a busy community of fisherfolk and lace-makers. In the struggle for existence it has fared better than its older and once more prosperous neighbors, Murano and Torcello; the former it has, in fact, annexed by means of a long, arching, wooden bridge, which, seen from the low seat of a gondola, looks like that on a willow-pattern plate.

Approaching the island, one may find one's gondola passing or passed by increasing numbers of fishing boats racing each other home to Burano; finely bronzed, statuesque men stand bending lustily to their oars, their half-clad forms showing many a fine play and molding of muscle. The sails of these boats are of delightful coloring—saffron and sienna, orange, red and burnt amber—and are often emblazoned with fantastic designs, or with stars, flowers or portraits of patron saints.

Then the island, with its leaning campanile, appears before one, its many-tinted walls basking in the late sunlight. Approaching it on its westward side one glides past the opening of a canal that intersects the island, and a first glance it reveals a scene that must live long in the memory of any lover of movement and color. The quay sides are lined with fishing boats, newly home, many with their gorgeous sails still awaying idly and glowing in the level rays of the late afternoon sun. Sunburnt, carrying men are heaping piles of glittering fish before the cottage doors, helped by the women, who add still more color to the scene with the shawls and kerchiefs worn over their heads. These most becoming garments are, however, not as a rule very brilliantly hued, but of mauve, fawn color, or a tawny red, the stronger colors being reserved for



A BURANO BEAUTY



A SCENIC VIEW OF THE FISHER ISLAND OF BURANO



A TYPICAL FISHERMAN OF BURANO

the bodices. Shoals of brown children laugh and dance about the shining heaps, thrusting out, here and there, little bare feet to touch and make leap some strangely shaped, brilliantly hued fish.

All is swift movement, glowing colors and vivacious sound, the whole picture backed by the cottage walls, which themselves display many a soft, weather-stained tint, for the Buranelli are fond of washes of pink, light green and primrose color.

There I first met, old Pietro, with his crisp, white curls, ruddy bronze, and merry laugh, despite his ninety years and many seasons of toll in the boats, still cheerfully making his daily cast of nets. Old Nonna, his wife, was herself only a few years younger, but possessing a head of thick, wavy white hair, of which any woman twenty years her junior might have been proud. Always busy was she, mending, cooking, cleaning, and always, it seemed, happy, with a smiling word for every passer-by.

There, too, dwelt little Adelle, their granddaughter, an incarnation of youthful loveliness and delight in life. Merry, gracious, tender-hearted Adelle, with your great brown eyes, tossing curls, and flash of teeth, with your dancing feet and quick, helpful hands, how many pictures and memories you gave us, little one! I recall how when first we landed from our gondola, and the bandit horde of village children came flying down the shore, leaving their games to crowd around us, with their cries of "Soldi, soldi, signore!" you, like a proud little princess, remained behind, by the ruined wall, tying your bunch of rosy flowers.

Yet once you did beg; it was when you took us to see that poor, wasted little friend of yours, sitting at her cottage door, bending so frailly over her pillow lace; then you took her small, thin hand and drew it toward me, whispering a shy "Soldi" in my ear, and I felt proud of my little friend and her way of begging.

And again I see you, with your young rogue of a brother, Beppo, putting out in the small, light gondola—sandola, did you call it?—one May evening at moonrise, to take the same little friend's bunch of pink Judas-blossom across the lagoon and lay it before the shrine of the Fisherman's Madonna, that stood up solitary out of the shadowy waters, there to offer up your simple prayer for her recovery.

each sentence ends in a sort of trailing diminutive.

One is loath to leave the little island and row home at last. But the lagoon is quieting down to a pearly gray in the evening light, though still flushed to westward with a faint rose, which touches also the far-away peaks of the Euganean hills. Presently the moon rises behind Murano, and ere long a welcoming path of reflected lamp-lights shines on the water, from Riva and Piazzetta, and soon Danielli's landing stage receives one again. But that first glimpse of the brilliant, vivid scene in the fisherman's canal at Burano, of the healthy, handsome old faces and the laughing young ones, will haunt a grateful memory for many a day.

And Adelle herself may still be found there, only two years older, and still, one may hope, wreathing her flowers, tending her old folk and her little friend, working busily at her lace, and affording, in her gracious being, recompense for many a disillusionment of travel.

A NOTE OF SYMPATHY

Immediately on knowing of a death in the family of a friend one should show formal recognition of the fact, even though the acquaintance be slight. Only if one is really an old friend does one send a note or go to the house, but unless some attention is paid to the affliction those who are undergoing it have no way of knowing whether the others from whom they have not heard are aware of it.

To post one's visiting card, or, better still, to leave it at the house in person is the most formal way one may do. Something may be written on the card or not, as one chooses; but, generally speaking, if one writes at all the form should take that of a note and not a line on a card, which may always be considered casual, saving the bother of a note. The card, which should be accompanied also by that of the husband when a woman is married, is addressed to the widow or widower, as the case may be, or to the parents when the death has been that of a child.

Flowers which may be sent are addressed to the head of the house and visiting cards are placed in the box. It is not good form to send them when funeral notices request that flowers shall be omitted. If one is keenly desirous of expressing a sympathy which is felt, one may wait until after the funeral services and send flowers to the person most deeply bereaved, as the wife, or widow. Only at that time are blossoms received by an individual; that is, any sent before a funeral are supposed to be for use at the services and are not retained in the house. Those sent several days afterward are undoubtedly meant for the use of the individual to whom they are addressed.

It is a very pretty thought to show such an attention a week or so after a funeral, for those in affliction are more than apt to feel that their grief is quickly forgotten by their friends, who are all sympathy at first. It is not necessary that any note shall accompany the box, but the recipient is required to send a note of thanks, written either by herself or another member of the family or a friend for her.

Hope Miniver and her father had not enjoyed their breakfast. When two individuals so closely akin are so widely apart in their preferences there is small opportunity for the appetite to assert itself. It really took something of importance to interfere with Tom Miniver's appreciation of a good breakfast, but that something had occurred. For the first time in her life his daughter had declared—so positively that he knew she meant it—that she wouldn't!

"And why, I should like to know?" he had demanded testily. "Oh, rather, why not?" Tom Miniver was a purist only when he was very angry. "Because I can't endure him," she had answered promptly, "and I don't know any good reason why I should compel myself." She was only an idealized replica of her masterful father in the matter of temperament.

"All bosh! Regular penny dreadful logic!" he had declared, with a wrathful insistence that was beginning to interfere perceptibly with his good looks. "How about the implacable parent?" she had returned, with a little smile that emphasized hers. That brought him to a realization of his absurdity, but it hadn't the slightest effect on his determination to have his own way in this business. She had succeeded in spoiling his breakfast, but she could not overrule him in this matter which concerned him so vitally. For a strange mental coincidence Hope arrived at precisely the same conclusion at the same moment.

"I don't believe," he resumed, "that you have given the actual reason."

"If you know a better one, pray don't keep it a secret on my account," she returned audaciously. "Well, I won't—Bob Hober."

"She flushed perceptibly and began to bustle, transferring the coffee urn from the table to the sideboard, an operation entirely unnecessary. "Have I hit it?" he persisted maliciously. Her back was toward him, but he could see her face in the sideboard glass.

"Mr. Hober is a man," she said. "How would you classify Percy Van Alstine?"

At which she turned around and faced him. "Even were I a naturalist I should hesitate," she replied, with a distinctness of tone that was almost convincing.

"He could provide you with luxuries that have become necessities to you. Have you thought of that? I admit that Hober is a fine fellow. I ought to know—I've made him. He came to me as an office boy and now he is practically my manager. He's a keen business man, none shrewder. But he hasn't anything except his salary—less than what you spend for gin-cracks. He must be provided with plenty of nerve to—to—"

"You could take him into the business," she suggested naively. "Besides he is going to make a lot of money."

"How—I should like to have you tell me?"

"As you do—speculate." "Do you mean to buy and sell at a risk?"

"Certainly—just as you do." "I never risk anything," he declared, savagely. "I always see to it beforehand that the element of uncertainty is eliminated."

"Well, can't Mr. Hober manage it the same way?"

He grunted and shook his head hopelessly, and then he rang for his hat and coat. Before he left her, however, he fired a parting shot.

"I am quite too well bred to say what I think," he declared with an air of lofty superiority that appealed eloquently to Hope's sense of humor. "but I don't mind saying that, in view of your opportunities and the fact that you are my daughter, you show an ignorance of men and affairs that is colossal—elephantine."

It happened that Van Alstine had accepted an invitation to lunch with Mr. Miniver on that day. Although no definite arrangement had been made to that effect, it was understood by the broker and the young man whose suit he favored that the subject of the proposed matrimonial alliance would come up for informal discussion. As yet Van Alstine had made no direct proposal for the honor of becoming the broker's son-in-law, but he made no secret of the fact that he admired Miss Miniver greatly and would probably become a suitor for her hand. He had even mentioned the matter to several of his friends, most of whom agreed that his family was good enough even to survive an alliance with the Minivers.

pressed favorably. The minimum of space and excess of activity conflicted with his notion of personal expansion, and on his passage from his car to the entrance of the office building he had been jostled unmistakably. It was a positive relief to reach Miniver's quarters and be given a seat in the anteroom while his card was making its way to the presiding genius of the spot.

He waited patiently enough at first and then with a growing distaste. All the doors between the small rooms which comprised the suite were open and Van Alstine was dismayed to find that some of the din and bustle that had assailed him on the outside had followed him. Loud voices were calling in every direction, messenger boys were running hither and thither and the incessant clicking of telegraphic instruments and ringing of telephone calls set his nervous system on edge. No one seemed to take the slightest notice of him, and the forced realization of his lack of importance was not an agreeable sensation.

After he had waited for what seemed to him an unconscionable period Miniver made his appearance. The broker was in his shirt sleeves, open at the wrists, cuff links dangling. He had the unlighted stub of a cigar in his mouth and appeared to be in a state of intense nervous strain.

"Awfully sorry to have kept you waiting," he said, after they had shaken hands. "Meant to have phoned you that I'd have to call that luncheon off, but I forgot all about it. It's a awful day for us. They've been pounding us like mad for two hours and the end is not yet. What's that? D. and R. G. off another point! Homer, get a move on and buy everything in sight. Can't you come down some other day—soon—Van Alstine? How's that? I've sent out for a sandwich. C. and I killing, eh? Let's put 'em to bed. Sell all we've got. Don't keep enough for seeds. One of the biggest days I've ever seen since I came into the street. Wha—wha—wha—"

Without a word of apology or explanation Miniver made a precipitous exit from the room. Somewhere in the rear his high-pitched voice continued to reel off orders at a frenzied rate, but Van Alstine saw no more of him that day. Just as he had yielded to his not unreasonable indignation and was about to leave the uncongenial spot Homer entered the room.

"Mr. Miniver wishes me to apologize for him," he said. "This is really one of the hottest days the street has seen for many years."

"Is it so unusual?" queried the other listlessly. "I have not been in the neighborhood since I was a child, but I fancied it was just about living up to its reputation."

"It's doing much more than that," laughed Homer. "Before closing today there'll be more than one financial shipwreck that will startle the business community. Do you ever deal in futures, Mr. Van Alstine?"

"So far I have found the present sufficiently engrossing," the visitor admitted, with a feeble attempt at pleasantry. Then he added, soberly enough: "I suppose Mr. Miniver is deeply interested in these matters. He seemed to be very greatly disturbed over something."

"Isn't it enough to rattle any man to find out that he's a million out of pocket? We've been on the wrong side of the market ever since the opening."

"Bulls or bears?" asked Van Alstine, who did not know what else to say.

"Either," replied Homer, "as the emergency demands."

Van Alstine took his leave. He was so shaken by his experience in the street that he went abroad almost immediately to remain for an indefinite period.

About a year later he came face to face with Homer in London. The young man greeted him cordially and invited him to call at the hotel at which he and his wife were stopping.

"She's an old friend of yours—Miss Miniver, you know," explained Bob. "Come to see us. Plenty of time to visit with you now—"

"How did Miniver come out of that Wall street affair?" interrupted Van Alstine.

"Oh, a couple of millions to the good!"

"Why, I thought—I fancied he was losing heavily."

"He was—in the morning, but he was a big winner in the afternoon."

Life of Telephone Poles.
The average life of an untreated seasoned pole depends much upon the kind of timber, its condition when set, the condition of the soil and the climatic conditions, and these are all so variable that a definite statement as to the average life is difficult. Most companies can closely estimate the average life of their poles as controlled by their local conditions by referring to their pole records. The average throughout the country, however, is apparently somewhat as follows: Cedar, 13½ years; chestnut, 13 years; cypress, nine years; pine, 6½ years; juniper, 8½ years.—Electrical Record.