

board their ships to transport her army to the Holy Land. These, being a practical people, demanded payment for this service in blood, since the gold wherewith to pay was lacking. Thus the French went to the assault of Lara, and retook for the Venetians the Dalmatian colonies which had shaken off their yoke.

The oldest, perhaps, of modern nations, the Venetians outstripped all others in the arts of civilization.

ple of our hemisphere, the Arabs and the Greeks, to borrow from them the elements of their delicate and exquisite arts.

The more familiar we grow with the history of Venice, the more we come to marvel at the practical commonsense of this handful of human beings, who, by the fourteenth or fifteenth century, were making more noise in the world, and filling a greater place, than the populations of the largest empires.



THE STORIED COLONNADES.

Before the tenth century they had built on their group of islands no less than seventy churches, some of which, like those of Torcello, were miracles of art. They were the first to have the sense of luxury, to appreciate the refinements of life, the first to delight in sumptuous houses and fabrics, in the splendour of gems and the sheen of pearls. While Europe was yet plunged in the darkness of the Middle Ages, the Venetians went to the only two civilized peo-

As early as the fifth century we find them in possession of a government, in the shape of Consuls sent from Padua to administer the islets of the Rialto. In the seventh century they begin to feel their way toward a new form of government, and nominate a Doge, Paul of Heraclea. In 737 they appoint as heads of the State certain yearly magistrates, called "masters of the militia;" but, five years later, finding that the constant transfer of power gives in-