

The early history of Venice is of unique interest, and all historical students will be indebted to Mr. Hodgson for this very scholarly work, founded on minute research into original authorities, and embodying all the learning of the Germans on the subject. A third part of Mr. Horatio F. Brown's well-known "History of Venice" covers the same ground, but by confining himself to the early centuries, Mr. Hodgson is enabled to go into details which are not easily accessible elsewhere. The causes which enabled Venice to maintain her isolation and independence against both Rome and Constantinople, to escape feudal influence, and to develop her democratic constitution are brought out. While election to high offices for short terms was common in the Western Empire, the peculiarity of the office of Doge was that it was an elective office for life, that it never became hereditary, and that the institution lasted for eleven centuries. Of the early doges, the most remarkable are Pietro Orseolo II., the friend of the Emperor Otto III., who conquered Dalmatia in 1000, and Enrico Dandolo. Mr. Hodgson discusses at length the opinion advanced that Dandolo had been bribed by the Sultan of Egypt to prevent the crusading host assembled at Venice from carrying out the original plan of crusade, and it is satisfactory that he is able to agree with M. Hanotaux, the French Minister, who has also investigated the subject, that the charge is groundless, and is due to the mistaken date of a treaty between Venice and Egypt. The whole story of the Fourth Crusade amply repays the closest examination. It has been told in the *langue d'oïl* of the Isle of France by one of the chief actors, Villehardouin, and the charm and spirit of the old chronicles are illustrated by Mr. Hodgson's full quotations.

The growth of the city, the history of the early churches and monasteries, the ecclesiastical system, the early Levant trade are all treated with equal minuteness. It is impossible to give too much credit for the thoroughness and critical care with which Mr. Hodgson has completed his task. Students who care to go below the surface will find here rich sources of