

imperial ambassador, and entertained them with the adventure in which their cook and butler had a share. The company consisted entirely of foreigners; none of the Venetian nobility ever visiting the ministers of other courts.

Next day the Duke of Hamilton, accompanied by the archduke and duchess, several Venetian ladies of the first distinction, and a deputation from the senate, visited the arsenal. This fortification is between two and three miles in circumference, and has many little watch-towers on the ramparts, where sentinels are stationed.

Here the Venetians build their ships, cast their cannon, and make their cables. The arms are arranged in large rooms, divided into narrow walks by long walls of muskets, pikes, and halberds.

After seeing a cannon cast, the company were conducted on board the Bucentaur, or state vessel, in which the doge is carried to espouse the Adriatic. It is finely gilt and ornamented within, and loaded on the outside with emblematic figures in sculpture.

The ceremony of marrying the Adriatic is performed every ascension day. The morning is ushered in by ringing of bells and firing of cannon. About noon, the doge, attended by a numerous party of the senate and the clergy, goes on board the Bucentaur, round which a number of splendid yachts and gondolas row, with bands of music, to St. Lido, a small island about two miles from Venice. Prayers are then said, after which the doge drops a ring into the sea, with these words, "*Desponsamus te, Mare, in signum veri, perpetui que dominii.*"

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