

Under the porticos, which lead to this staircase, are the gaping mouths of lions, to receive anonymous letters and accusations.

The ducal apartments are ornamented by the pencils of Titian, Paul Veronese, Tintoret, Palma, the Bassans, and other painters. The Rape of Europa, and the Storming of Zara, by Paul Veronese, are highly esteemed. Many of the subjects are taken from the history of Venice. Within the palace is a small arsenal, which communicates with the hall of the great council. Here a great number of muskets are kept, ready charged, with which the nobles may arm themselves, on any sudden emergency.

The lower gallery, or the piazza under the palace, is called the Broglio. In this the noble Venetians walk and converse, and it is only here, or at council, that they associate, lest they should give umbrage to the state inquisitors. Persons of inferior rank seldom remain on the Broglio, when the place is occupied by the nobility.

Though St. Mark's place is the only morning lounge in this city, yet it is chiefly in the evening that it is filled. At that season, in fine weather, there is an immense jumble of all ranks, professions and nations assembled here; some in masks, and some impudent enough to seek no disguise.

When the piazza is illuminated, and the shops in the adjacent streets lighted up, the whole has a brilliant effect; and as it is the custom for the ladies, as well as the gentlemen, to frequent the casinos and coffee-houses round, the place of St. Mark answers all the purposes of our Vauxhall, or Ranelagh.