Cadore, a Venetian victory which he recorded in a paint­ing. In the 12th century the count of Camino became count also of Cadore. He was called Guecello ; and this name descended in 1321 to the podestà (or mayor) of Cadore, to the stock to which the painter belonged. Titian, one of a family of four, and son of Gregorio Vecelli, a distinguished councillor and soldier, and of his wife Lucia, was born in 1477.

It used to be said that Titian, when a child, painted upon the wall of the Casa Sampieri, with flower-juice, a Madonna and Infant with a boy-angel; but modern connoisseurs say that the picture is a common work, of a date later than Titian’s decease. He was still a child when sent by his parents to Venice, to an uncle’s house. There he was placed under an art-teacher, who may per­haps have been Sebastiano Zuccato, a mosaicist and painter now forgotten. He next became a pupil of Gentile Bellini, whom he left after a while, because the master considered him too offhand in work. Here he had the opportunity of studying many fine antiques. His last instructor was Giovanni Bellini ; but Titian was not altogether satisfied with his tutoring. The youth was a contemporary of Giorgione and Palma (Vecchio); when his period of pupilage expired, he is surmised to have entered into a sort of partnership with Giorgione. A fresco of Hercules on the Morosini Palace is said to have been one of his earliest works ; others were the Virgin and Child, in the Vienna Belvedere, and the Visitation of Mary and Elizabeth (from the convent of S. Andrea), now in the Venetian academy. In 1507-8 Giorgione was com­missioned by the state to execute frescos on the re-erected Fondaco de’ Tedeschi. Titian and Morto da Feltre worked along with him, and some fragments of Titian’s paintings, which are reputed to have surpassed Giorgione’s, are still discernible. According to one account, Giorgione was nettled at this superiority, and denied Titian admittance to his house thenceforth. Stories of jealousies between painters are rife in all regions, and in none more than in the Venetian,—various statements of this kind apply­ing to Titian himself. One should neither accept nor re­ject them uninquiringly ; counter-evidence of some weight can be cited for Vecelli’s vindication in relation to Moroni, Correggio, Lotto, and Coello. Towards 1511, after the cessation of the League of Cambrai—which had endea­voured to shatter the power of the Venetian republic, and had at any rate succeeded in clipping the wings of the lion of St Mark—Vecelli went to Padua, and painted in the Scuola di S. Antonio a series of frescos, which con­tinue to be an object of high curiosity to the students of his genius, although they cannot be matched against his finest achievements in oil painting. Another fresco, dated 1523, is St Christopher carrying the Infant Christ, at the foot of the doge’s steps in the ducal palace of Venice. From Padua Titian in 1512 returned to Venice; and in 1513 he obtained a broker’s patent in the Fondaco de’ Tedeschi, termed “ La Sanseria ” or “ Senseria ” (a pri­vilege much coveted by rising or risen artists), and became superintendent of the Government works, being especially charged to complete the paintings left unfinished by Gio­vanni Bellini in the hall of the great council in the ducal palace. He set up an atelier on the Grand Canal, at S. Samuele,—the precise site being now unknown. It was not until 1516, upon the death of Bellini, that he came into actual enjoyment of his patent ; at the same date an arrangement for painting was entered into with Titian alone, to the exclusion of other artists who had heretofore been associated with him. The patent yielded him a good annuity —120 crowns—and exempted him from certain taxes,—he being bound in return to paint likenesses of the successive doges of his time at the fixed price of eight crowns each. The actual number which he executed was five. Titian, it may be well to note as a landmark in this all but centenarian life of incessant artistic labour and productiveness, was now in the fortieth year of his age. The same year, 1516, witnessed his first journey to Fer­rara. Two years later was produced, for the high altar of the church of the Frari, one of his most world-renowned masterpieces, the Assumption of the Madonna, now in the Venetian academy. It excited a vast sensation, being indeed the most extraordinary piece of colourist execution on a great scale which Italy had yet seen. The signoria took note of the facts, and did not fail to observe that Titian was neglecting his work in the hall of the great council.

Vecelli was now at the height of his fame ; and towards 1521, following the production of a figure of St Sebastian for the papal legate in Brescia (a work of which there are numerous replicas), purchasers became extremely urgent for his productions. It may have been about 1523, after some irregular living and a consequent fever, that he married a lady of whom only the Christian name, Cecilia, has come down to us ; her first child, Pomponio, was born in 1525, and two (or perhaps three) others followed. Towards 1526 he became acquainted, and soon exceedingly intimate, with Pietro Aretino, the literary bravo, of influ­ence and audacity hitherto unexampled, who figures so strangely in the chronicles of the time. Titian sent a portrait of him to Gonzaga, duke of Mantua. A great affliction befell him in August 1530, in the death of his wife. He then, with his three children—one of them being the infant Lavinia, whose birth had been fatal to the mother—removed to a new home, and got his sister Orsa to come from Cadore and take charge of the household. The mansion, difficult now to find, is in the Biri Grande, then a fashionable suburb, being in the extreme end of Venice on the sea, with beautiful gardens and a look-out towards Murano. In 1532 he painted in Bologna a portrait of the emperor Charles V., and was created a count pala­tine and knight of the Golden Spur, his children also being made nobles of the empire,—for a painter, honours of an unexampled kind.

The Venetian Government, dissatisfied at Titian’s neg­lect of the work for the ducal palace, ordered him in 1538 to refund the money which he had received for time unemployed ; and Pordenone, his formidable rival of recent years, was installed in his place. At the end of a year, however, Pordenone died ; and Titian, who had meanwhile applied himself diligently to painting in the hall the battle of Cadore, was reinstated. This great picture, which was burned with several others in 1577, represented in life-size the moment at which the Venetian captain, D’Alviano, fronted the enemy, with horses and men crashing down into the stream. Fontana’s engraving, and a sketch by Titian himself in the gallery of the Uffizi in Florence, record the energetic composition. As a matter of professional and worldly success, his position from about this time may be regarded as higher than that of any other painter known to history, except Raphael, Michelangelo, and at a later date Rubens. In 1540 he received a pen­sion from D’Avalos, Marquis del Vasto, and an annuity of 200 crowns (which was afterwards doubled) from Charles V. on the treasury of Milan. Another source of profit— for he was always sufficiently keen after money—was a contract, obtained in 1542, for supplying grain to Cadore, which he visited with regularity almost every year, and where he was both generous and influential. This reminds us of Shakespeare and his relations to his birthplace, Stratford-on-Avon; and indeed the great Venetian and the greater Englishman had something akin in the essen­tially *natural* tone of their inspiration and performance,