republic, reſolved to make an attack upon Venice, now weakened by the abſence of the doge and ſuch a powerful fleet. But the ſenate, having timely notice of the empe­ror’s intentions, recalled the doge, who instantly obeyed the ſummons. Stopping at Rhodes, in his way home to refresh and water the fleet, the inhabitants refused to furnish him with the necessaries he demanded. Incenſed at this denial, he levelled their city with the ground ; and from thence failing to Chios, he laid waste and destroyed the country, carrying off the body of St Isidore, in thoſe days accounted an inestimable treasure. After this he ſeized on the islands of Samos, Leſbos, Andros, and all thoſe in the Archipela­go belonging to the emperor ; and having reduced Zara, Spolatra, and Trahu, places in Dalmatia which had revolt­ed during his abſence, he returned in triumph to Venice, where he was received with great joy.

The Venetians now became very formidable throughout all Europe. The Sicilians, Paduans, with the states of Ve­rona and Ferrara, felt the weight of their power ; and in 1173 they ventured to oppoſe Frederic Barbarossa emperor of Germany. The occasion of this quarrel was, that pope Alexander had taken shelter in Venice in order to avoid the reſentment of Barbarossa, who had conceived an impla­cable aversion againſt him. The Venetians diſpatched ambassadors to him ; but he anſwered them in a rage, “ Go tell your prince and people; that Frederic the Roman em­peror demands his enemy, who is protected by them. If they send him not inſtantly bound hand and foot, be will overturn every law, human and divine, to accompliſh his revenge ; he will bring his army before their city, and fix his victorious standards in the market-place, which ſhall float in the blood of its citizens.” On the return of the ambassadors with this terrible menace, it was agreed to equip a fleet with all expedition, and prepare for repelling the attacks of ſuch a formidable and haughty enemy. But before the armament could be prepared, Otho, the emperor’s ſon, arrived before the city with a fleet of 75 galleys. The doge Sebastiano Ziani sailed out with the few vessels he had got equipped, to give the enemy battle. The fleets met off the coaſt of Istria, and a terrible engagement enſued, in which the imperial fleet was totally defeated, Otho himſelf taken priſoner, and 48 of his ſhips destroyed. On the doge’s return, the pope went out to meet him, and preſented him with a ring, saying, “ Take this, Ziani, and give it to the ſea, as a testimony of your dominion over it. Let your ſuccessors annually perform the same ceremony, that posterity may know that your valour has purchaſed this prero­gative, and ſubjected this element to you, even as a huſband ſubjecteth his wife.” Otho was treated with the respect due to his rank ; and ſoon conceived a great friendship for Ziani. At last, being permitted to vint the imperial court on his parole, he not only prevailed on his father to make peace with the Venetians, but even to visit their city, ſo named for its commerce and naval power. He was received with all possible reſpect, and on his departure attended to Ancona by the doge, the ſenate, and the whole body of the nobility, During this journey he was reconciled to the pope ; and both agreed to pay the highest honours to the doge and republic.

In the beginning of the 13th century, the Venetians, now become exceedingly powerful and opulent, by reaſon of the commerce which they carried on with the richest countries of the world, were invited by young Alexis, ſon to the emperor of Constantinople, to his father’s assistant, who had been depoſed by a rebellious faction. In conjunc­tion with the French, they undertook to restore him ; and easily ſucceeded. But the old emperor dying ſoon after, his son was elected in his room, and a few days after mur­dered by his own ſubjects ; on which the empire was ſeized by Myrtillus, a man of mean birth, who had been raised by the favour of old Alexis. As the allied army of French and Venetians was encamped without the city, Myrtillus reſolved immediately to drive them out of his dominions, and for this purpoſe attempted to ſurpriſe their camp ; but being repulsed, he ſhut himſelf up in the city, with a reſolution to stand a siege. The allies assaulted it with ſo much vigour, that the uſurper was obliged to fly ; and though the citizens held out after his departure, they were obliged in leſs than three months to capitulate. This proved a ſource of greater acquisition to Venice than all that had yet happened. All the chief offices of the city were filled up with Venetians, in recompenſe for their ſervices : the allies entered Thrace, and ſubdued it ; Candia, and all the Greek iſlands, alſo fell under the dominion of the republic.

In the mean time the Genoeſe, by their ſucceſsful appli­cation to commerce, having raised themſelves in ſuch a man­ner as to be capable of rivalling the Venetians, a long ſeries of wars took place between the republics ; in which the Venetians generally had the advantage, though ſometimes they met with terrible overthrows. These expensive and bloody quarrels undoubtedly weakened the republic in the main, notwithstanding its ſuccesses. In the year 1348, however, the Genoeſe were obliged to implore the protec­tion of Visconti duke of Milan, in order to ſupport them againſt their implacable enemies the Venetians. Soon after this, in the year 1352, the latter were utterly defeated, with ſuch loſs, that it was thought the city itſelf must have fal­len into the hands of the Genoeſe, had they known how to improve their victory. This was in a ſhort time followed by a peace ; but from this time the power of the republic began to decline. Continual wars with the states of Italy, with the Hungarians, and their own rebellious subjects, kept the Venetians employed ſo that they had no leiſure to oppoſe the Turks, whose rapid advances ought to have alarmed all Europe. After the destruction of the eastern empire, the Turks came more immediately to interfere with the republic. The conſequences are related under the ar­ticle Turkey. Whatever valour might be fhown by the Venetians, or whatever ſuccesses they might boast of, it is certain that the Turks ultimately prevailed; ſo that for ſome time it ſeemed ſcarce poſſible to resist them. What contributed alſo greatly to the decline of the republic, was the diſcovery of a passage to the East Indies by the Cape of Good Hope in 1497. To this time the greatest part of the Eaſt India goods imported into Europe passed thro' the hands of the Venetians ; but as ſoon as the above-men­tioned diſcovery took place, the carriage by the way of Alex­andria almost entirely ceaſed. Still, however, the Venetian power was strong ; and in the beginning of the 16th cen­tury they maintained a war against almost the whole power of France, Germany, and Italy ; but ſoon after we find them entering into an alliance with ſome Italian states and the king of France against the emperor. These wars, how­ever, produced no conſequences of any great moment ; and in 1573 tranquillity was restored by the conclusion of a peace with the Turks. Nothing of conſequence happened in the affairs of the Venetian republic till the year 1645, when the Turks made a ſudden and unexpected descent on the iſland of Candia. The ſenate of Venice did not display their uſual vigilance on this occasion. They had ſeen the immenſe warlike preparations going forward, and yet allowed themſelves to be amuſed by the grand seignior's de­claring war against Malta, and pretending that the arma­ment was intended againſt that iſland. The troops landed without opposition; and the town of Canéa was taken, a ter an obstinate defence.