

hidden from those who cling to the waterways. The streets wind incredibly and a map is of little use. Nor is the Venetian often of much assistance and his *sempre diretto* in a town where few streets go straight for more than fifty yards, can be singularly unhelpful. But perseverance always leads to some identifiable place and even the wrong turnings are not wasted in a town so picturesque.

Every here and there the streets emerge upon one of the many *campi*. They would be *piazze* in any other town but Venice has only one *Piazza*. The name *campo* recalls the time when every Church had a field in front of it for pasturing flocks in times of siege.



*The Rialto Bridge*

These fields are now paved over but the name remains. The *campi* are indeed the true centres of Venetian life. Each one is a little shopping centre with its well, now fed by a good aqueduct from Padua, its Church, its various shops including the inevitable and essential barber, and its crowd of hawkers. Its people are not great travellers. Venice is divided into six *sestieri* or wards, and often the inhabitants of one ward will be quite unable to find their way about another. As Venice is well sign-posted, it is useful to know the method of division. Three *sestieri* lie on the north side of

the Grand Canal. These are Cannaregio, including the railway station, on the west, S. Marco in the middle and Castello, where lie the Public Gardens and the Arsenal, on the east. South of the Canal opposite Cannaregio is S. Croce. In the middle is S. Polo and eastward where S. Maria della Salute stands, is Dorsoduro which includes the island of the Giudecca. The houses in the *sestieri* are numbered throughout, so that house numbers often run into four figures and have no relation whatever to the length of the street.

The shops of Venice are not notably good, but the two great shopping streets, the Merceria and the Frezzaria, are interesting for here can be bought the typical wares of Venice, glass beads and mosaic work, glassware from the workshops of Murano, and Venetian lace which has greatly improved in the last twenty years after a period of decadence and bad design.

The bridges of Venice are a feature of the city as well-known as her gondolas, for few paintings of that much pictured town but show at least one of them. The Rialto Bridge, built in 1588, is one of the best known with its typical arch to give free passage to the water traffic, and the Ponte di Paglia or Bridge of Straw, which joins the Mole to the Riva degli Schiavoni beside the Ducal Palace. Most tourist's eyes will travel beyond it to the Bridge of Sighs, a little covered bridge leading from the upper storey of the Palace to the Prisons across the little Rio di Palazzo. Though charming enough it is not a great work of art and its reputation is largely bogus but Browning has immortalised it for us. There are nearly 400 bridges in Venice, all of them arched to allow the gondola and its modern competitor the motor-boat to go their various ways. They serve a double purpose for in the evening half Venice comes out to lean upon their rails and watch the antics of the soldiers passing in