

VENICE

ITS INDIVIDUAL GROWTH FROM THE
EARLIEST BEGINNINGS TO THE
FALL OF THE REPUBLIC

BY
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=

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PART III — THE DECADENCE

VOLUME I



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and jokes in the curious sing-song of Chioggian dialect with its long-drawn reduplicated vowels.

In the piazzetta, on the quay, along the Riva degli Schiavoni a hundred other pastimes: the lotteries for fancy ware, the puppet show,¹ the rope-walkers, acrobats, panoramas, fortune-tellers, selling cabalistic literature, story-tellers, *improvisatori* singing to the guitar, the mandolin, or violin,² sellers of scented waters and cosmetics; the quacks, among them the famous Masgumieri, who professed to cure all diseases and

dispensava a macco
Sopra il balsamo greco il taccomacco.³

Still greater interest was roused by the wild-beast shows, and in the Carnival of 1751 the populace was diverted by the exhibition of a rhinoceros, the first ever seen in Venice; the strange animal had a medal⁴ struck in its honour and was painted by Pietro Longhi.⁵ A novel and even more remarkable spectacle

¹ The puppet show was always a great favourite with the Venetian populace. It first appeared in the Seicento, at which period the puppets Gambacorta, Paglialonga, and Borgogna were famous.

² *Riforma del Carnevale*, a Japanese romance. Venezia, Graziosi, sæc. 18.

³ Gozzi, Carlo, *Marfisa Bizzarra*, Canto IX, stanza 63.

⁴ The medal was of copper covered with tin; it measures 40 mm. in diameter, and represents a rhinoceros in the desert under a blazing sun. It bears the name of the place where it was cast, Nurnberg, and of its author, Vierney. The reverse has the following inscription: "Questo — rinoceroto — fu trasportato — d'Asia in Europa nell' — anno 1741 dal Capitano — Davide Montvandermeer — Il medemo animale è stato pesato a Stutgardo nel — Wirtemberggo li 6 Maggio — 1748, e pesava allora cinque — mila libre. Mangia ogni — giorno sessanta libre — di fieno, vinti libre — di pane, e beve — quattordici — secchie — d'acqua." Baletti, *Medagliere veneto* (in the *Rassegna d'arte*. Milano, September, 1903).

⁵ Grevembroch, in his oft-quoted work, has a coloured drawing of the beast, and in the description of it occurs the statement that in the fourteenth century, during the reign of Andrea Dandolo, another rhinoceros was brought to Venice. Longhi's picture was once in the Palazzo Pisani at Santo Stefano, and is now in the Museo Civico. The following inscription may be read in one corner: "Vero ritratto | de un rinoceronte | condotto in Venezia nel 1751 | fatto da Pietro Longhi | pel N. O. Giovanni Grimani de' Servi | Patrizio Veneto." There is a replica in the National Gallery in London.