

### *Venetian Painters of the Renaissance*

and porphyry, mother-of-pearl and opal, we shall still find some footsteps of these first Venetians unerased by tract of time.

Perhaps it is at Sant' Erasmo that the print is clearest; there are few materials that we cannot find here for reconstruction of the primeval settlement. There are rush-roofed shelters for the boats, rude landing-stages, low white *capane* roofed with thatch or tiles, long, narrow, stagnant waterways, high, grassy levels bordering the water; there are fields of reeds, and thickets of rustling poplars by *valli* where the fish stir and leap continuously, breaking the smooth water into a thousand ripples; there is the broad, central waterway, and countless lesser channels among the reeds, where one may see a boat slowly winding. Thus must Venice have been in her infancy. And if from among these lonely waterways and flats of Sant' Erasmo we look forward into the future, we can anticipate the gradual evolution of a city such as Venice was to be. The building of the first mud-huts; the driving of the first close-set clumps of piles; the filling of marsh-pools and strengthening of foundations; the light wooden bridges thrust across the water, as one may see them on the Lido to-day; the transition from houses of wood to houses of brick and stone, from thatch to tiles; the building of churches on the higher ground, each with its plot of grass about it; the paving of ways, the construction of wells and chimneys, paved campo and fondamenta; till we reach at last the city of palaces, of temples and of towers, the city of sumptuous colour, the *Venezia nobilissima* of Carpaccio and Gentile Bellini.

THE END