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Exhibition of
VENETIAN
DECORATIVE
ARTS

PROMOTED BY THE
"Associazione per il Lavoro"
UNDER THE AUSPICES OF
The Ex-Premier LUIGI LUZZATTI &
The ITALIAN EMBASSY at WASHINGTON

*Works produced by Artists &
artisans among the Venetian
refugees in the year of the
great war, 1918*

A Beautiful Collection of Antiques

SILO ART GALLERIES
40 East 45th St. Cor. Vanderbilt Ave.
New York City - Spring of 1919



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Luigi Luzzatti, Minister of State, Ex-Premier of Italy, High Commissioner of the Refugees of War, Honorary President of the "Associazione per il Lavoro."

I Veneti, che più soffersero
nella dura prova dalla
quale uscì l'Italia
splendidamente vittoriosa,
in questa mostra promossa
dall'Associazione per il lavoro
intendono a imitare
gli americani degli
Stati Uniti, che all'avversa
fortuna hanno saputo sempre
resistere più che alla buona.
Luigi Luzzatti

The Venetians, who suffered most in the bitter trial from which Italy emerged splendidly victorious, proposed, with this Exhibition, promoted by the Associazione per il Lavoro di Venezia, to emulate the people of the United States, who are never daunted by misfortunes.—Luigi Luzzatti.

VENICE



VENICE, transfigured, silent and heroic, full of passion and of faith, is born anew into a grandeur, worthy of her olden days. Her people who, in the dark scenes of the Tragedy of Europe, suffered, hoped, and toiled in courage and silence, greet her modern Renaissance.

In the years before the war Venice had been a center of art and beauty. Life slipped by easily and quietly; the harbor was busy with its thousands of workers; the trades and industries were prosperous. She was the Mecca for all the artists and lovers in the world. Every other year, her international Art Exhibitions gathered together the most striking works of all modern artists and revealed the new leaders: Sargent, Besnard, Tito, Frank Brangwyn, Grubjci, Zorn, Zuloaga, Stuck, Klimt, Chini. The lesser arts were flourishing; there were signs, still vague and scattered, of a new revival of the industrial arts in glass, marble, wood, iron, and mosaic.

THE WAR CAME.

The war came. The lights were extinguished; the lovers fled. The city was suddenly deserted by all but its own people, and stood, an outpost facing the enemy, in the dark. The men who could bear arms left to join the colors; only the old men, the children and the women remained. On moonlit nights the aeroplanes came in swarms; in one evening three hundred and fifty bombs were dropped,—on Venice, so fragile, so delicate, that it almost seems as though a sudden gust could make her fall.

THE HARD TIMES.

Life there grew harder and harder. For then that very form of commercial activity had ceased, the harbor closed to traffic, all the factories and shops shut, Venice found herself utterly without means of livelihood. In August, 1914, the people of the city appealed to

the Mayor, Filippo Grimani, for work. True to the traditional-expression which Sansovino has recorded, "We are not ruled by one, nor by few, nor by many, but by many good men, by a few better men, and by one who is best of all," he summoned the "better" citizens and there was at once organized,—through generous subscriptions,—the Association of Venetian Industries (Associazione per il Lavoro di Venezia). Giancarlo Stucky, the prominent manufacturer and patron of art; Gino Toso, the ship-builder; Vittorio Friedemberg, the grain merchant, were among the first to contribute. Others joined in aiding the project, including the Royal family. Commendator Beppe Rava was named President of the new corporation. Luigi Luzzatti, Secretary of State, accepted the honorary presidency and lent his influence and aid to its success.

THE ASSOCIAZIONE PER IL LAVORO DI VENEZIA.

The Association had no selfish thought of gain; its purpose was to relieve, sometimes by loans, but more often by gifts, the industries and crafts which had been most seriously affected by the crisis. More than half a million lire were soon expended in aid of the lesser industries. Thus it was possible to begin again with courage and faith the occupations which had been interrupted, and this in spite of the brutal raids of the enemy on the city. The Association opened shops, provided materials, took over the finished products and arranged for their sale in behalf of and in the interests of the industries. It fostered especially the industrial arts and crafts, the small manufacturers of glass, mosaics, furniture, iron-work, and pearls,—those heirs of the ancient traditions of Venice, her eternal glory and the riches of the world.

AFTER THE RETREAT.

The dark days of Caporetto came. The Austrians were at Cava-Zuccherina, only a few miles from Venice. Not by their cannon, but by their stout hearts the Italian people stopped the enemy on the

Piave. But life in Venice had become impossible. The Dream City became a stronghold. Two hundred thousand Venetians who still remained, were forced to leave their homes and seek refuge elsewhere in Italy. The Italian people were forced to provide a living for these poor refugees who, in a single day, had lost all—property, work, home, family, all except their faith in justice.

WHAT THE “ASSOCIAZIONE” DID.

From this moment, the activity of the Association in behalf of the industrial arts of Venice assumed a larger and more significant character. The flight from Venice had scattered the humble artisans in the several crafts all over Italy. The terrific struggle for a livelihood was driving them into other occupations which,—though more menial, were more lucrative. The Association was able to provide them with the means of reuniting and of renewing their old occupations in the cities in which they had taken refuge. In spite of the serious condition of the transportation system, in a short time the groups of craftsmen were brought together again, tools were provided and a supply of raw materials assured. Work-shops were improvised, furnaces and kilns were opened and looms set up.

THE VENETIAN ARTISTS REASSUME THEIR WORK.

The Glass-furnace of the Barovier,—blowers of exquisite, artistic glass, that of Andrea Rioda, master of every form of glass and enamel, that of the Toso Brothers, manufacturers of chandeliers and murrine, were transferred to Leghorn in Tuscany. There, too, were established the brocade-velvet factory of Luigi Bevilacqua and the furniture factory of Luigi Bagarotto. The American Red Cross,—whose noble service will long be remembered in Italy,—opened an Asylum for the children of the refugees at Leghorn. Umberto Bellotto, forger of artistic iron work, moved to Pistoia where he gave an exhibition of his work which aroused a large interest. Olga Asta gathered around her in Florence the lace workers who were scattered

over Tuscany, and Maria Pezze Pascolato, a Venetian noblewoman, and well-known writer, transferred to Genoa the Municipal work shops of Venice, which gave employment to thousands of women. The mosaic workers gathered at Pietrasanta and at Rome, where the Mosaic workers' guild was already working on the monument to Victor Emanuel II. Luigi Toso's glass manufactory was transferred to Naples, where the manufacture of statuettes, Venetian "masks", and modern vases is still going on. The damask and brocade works of Trapolin resumed operations in Florence. In Florence, too, were working a number of artisans in wood and marble, under Florentine masters, joining to the clean-cut, monumental Tuscan style those elements of creative fancy which were their heritage. Others found occupation at Signa, at Borgo San Lorenzo and in Liguria.

THEIR BEAUTIFUL PRODUCTIONS.

The objects which they created in those hard days are of manifold beauty. Far from the shining domes of their Basilica, the golden reliquary where St. Mark watched over their city, the longing for Venice kindled the spirit of these modest artisans. The glass-workers of Murano, aided only by their iron pipes, long as organ pipes, and their traditional instinct, blew their vases and their magic galleons; the women of Burano, alone with their grief, wove the hangings for their lost altars and snow-white linen starred with flowers; with silk and gold they conjured up the glorious stones of their St. Mark; the rampant gryphons, the bunches of grapes, the lilies, the woven maze of feathers and of buds, the angels that come to herald Victory. The wood-workers carved in walnut old chairs like those where their Doge sat on days of state, or saved old fragments, fashioning them in new forms, and restoring the old pieces which had been saved and brought away in safety. The marble-workers carved in stone well-tops and Byzantine fountains. The iron-workers fashioned lamp-stands and gates of grill and hammered out cups, lighter and more delicate than those of their brothers, the glass-workers.

OUR EXHIBITION.

But events did not bring these brave workers the reward which their courage and faith deserved. Glass, furniture, mosaics, lace had been manufactured, but conditions in Italy were not favorable for their sale. The interest which a sincere friend of Italy, Mr. B. Harvey Carrol, American Consul at Venice, had shown in the fate of the Venetian Industrial Arts, emphasizing the demand for objects of artistic merit among the people of the United States, suggested to us the idea of bringing to America for satisfactory sale the objects of decorative art which the Venetians had produced during their exile. The Association of Venetian Industries approved of our plan; Luigi Luzzatti wrote:

“The Venetians, who have suffered most in the bitter trial from which Italy has emerged splendidly victorious, proposed, with this Exhibition, promoted by the Association of Venetian Industries, to emulate the Americans who are never daunted by misfortune.

The Italian Ambassador at Washington, Count Macchi di Cellere, telegraphed his approval and support. It was therefore decided to hold the exhibition in New York. The Mayor of Venice, Count Filippo Grimani, was kind enough to introduce it to the Mayor of New York with the following letter:

Venice, February 20th, 1919.

“To his Honor, the Mayor of New York,
From the Mayor of Venice, Italy.

The Association for Welfare Work of Venice has undertaken to conduct in New York City, an Exhibition of Venetian Decorative Arts. The purpose of the Association is not only to promote the commercial and industrial reconstructions of our region, which has been so severely stricken by the late war, but also to make known in foreign countries, and especially in America, the most notable productions of

THE EXHIBITION UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE GENERAL DIRECTOR OF FINE ARTS AND ANTIQUES IN ITALY.

In view of its local character, the Exhibition naturally cannot give a complete idea of the creative possibilities of all Italy. The difficult conditions limited production. But all the objects brought have been selected with the greatest care and nothing has been included which is not of the first quality. In colored embroideries, in mosaic, in stone, in iron and furniture, new forms have been attempted with satisfying results. Corrado Ricci, General Director of Fine Arts and Antiquities in Italy, insisted that nothing commonplace nor trite should be exhibited, and agreed that, after the bad taste and lack of artistic feeling which had been prevalent in Italy and everywhere since the Empire, a selection such as this was the first evidence of a new period, and wrote us—approving our undertaking. The Exhibition will appeal to the American people, not merely because of their sympathy for those who have suffered most from the war, but also because it will satisfy in every respect their impulse for beauty.

THE RENAISSANCE OF THE ARTS.

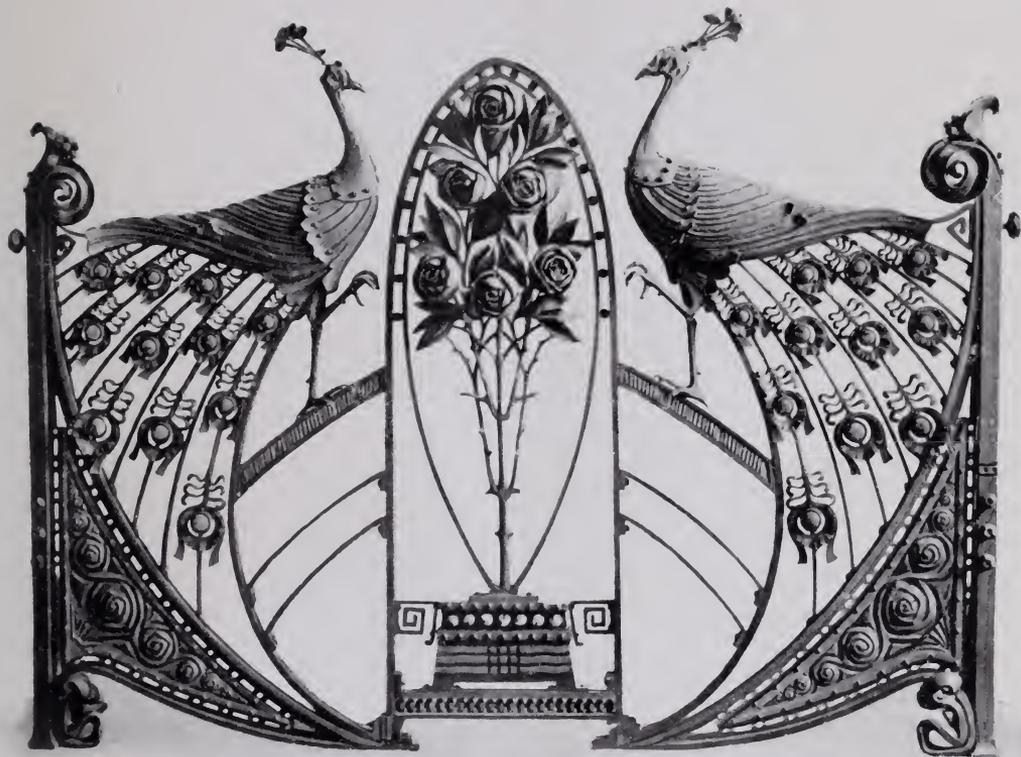
Even more than the great works of pure art—the painting, the lyric, the statue—the creations of solitary, exceptional spirits, the daily productions of those unknown craftsmen, the amphora, light as a breath, the furniture inspired by architectural instincts worthy of expression in stone, the iron, wrought into a flower,—these creations are a striking evidence that the Italians of today are in no way different from the Italians who were great in the past. They are still there, in their work-rooms and their shops, waiting, gifted with infinite possibility, fully awakened from the stupor into which the long years of foreign dominations and of slavery had thrown them, free at last and ready to prove once more with masterly works that they are still the greatest creators of beauty the world has ever known.



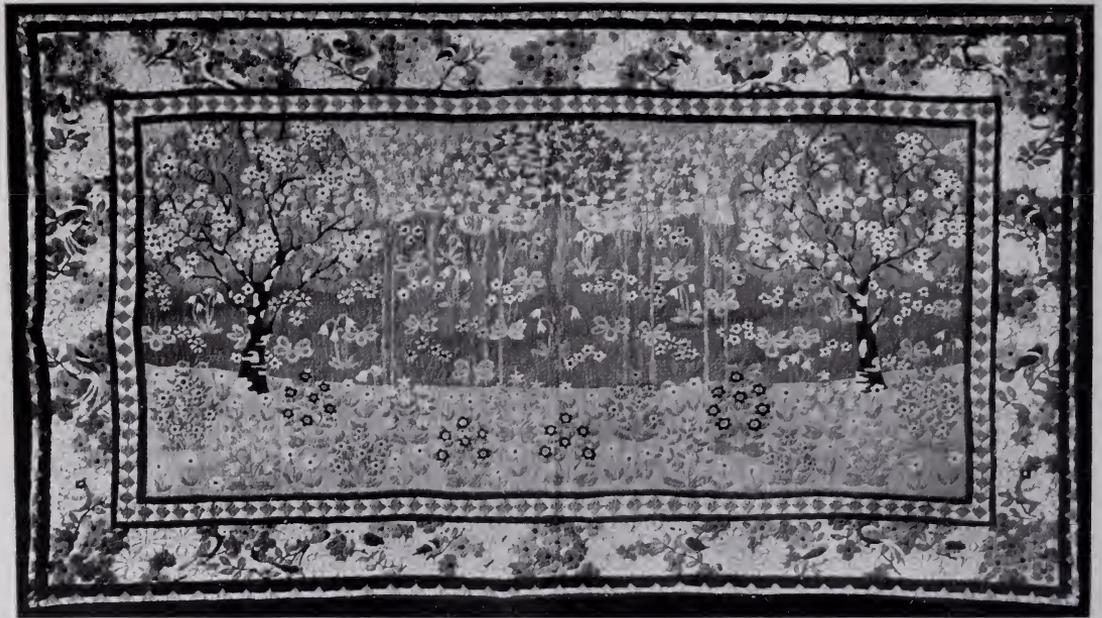
A view of the Venetian Municipal Work Rooms. The Women of Venice, while their men fought at the front for the defense of their glorious city with courage and hope, embroidered starry linens and laces.



Scene on the Piazza San Marco. This painting, depicting masqueraders in the historic plaza, represents a revival after many years of war of the old Venetian life.



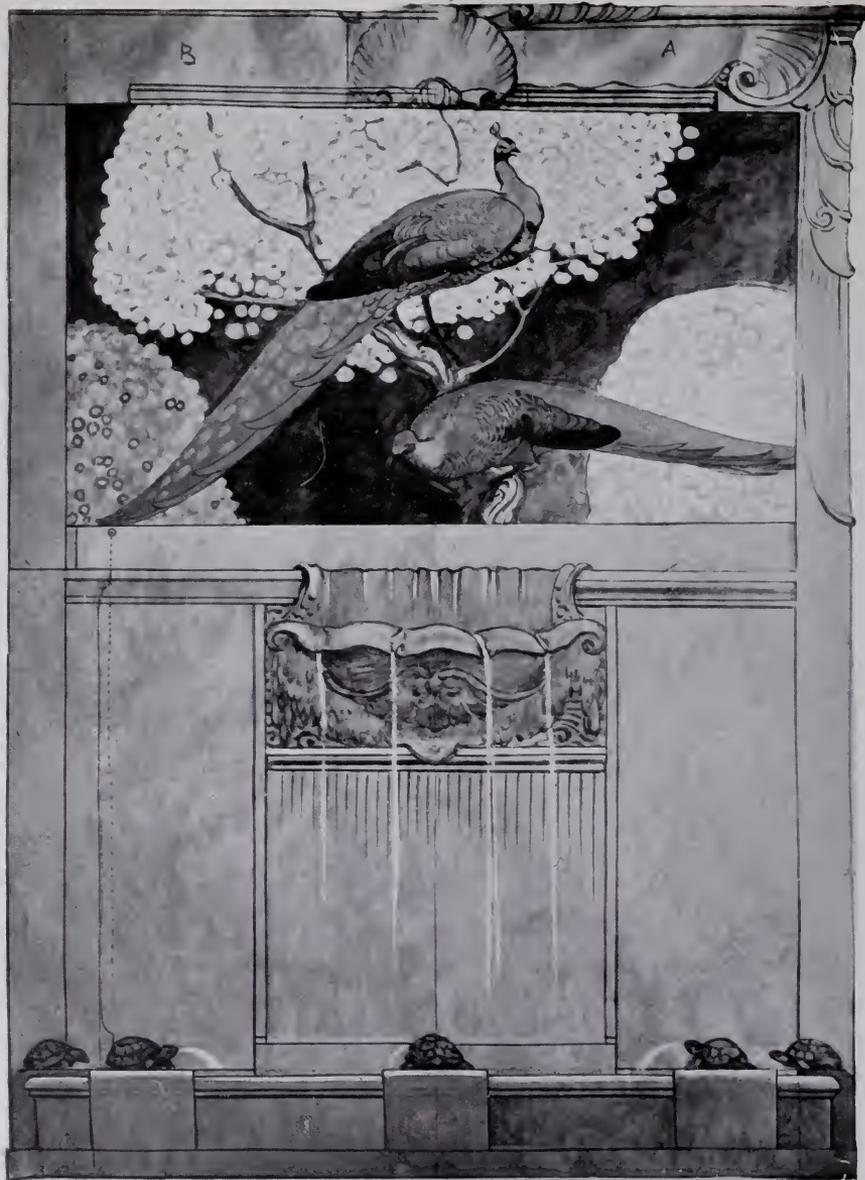
Postierla of wrought iron made by Alberto Calligaris of Udine. This magnificent work of Art, where the iron and the enamels play wonderful effects, was at the outbreak of the Austrian invasion concealed in a cellar, and after the victorious advance of the Italians, it was unearthed. Some other valuable works of Calligaris were decorated and transported to the Imperial Palace at Vienna.



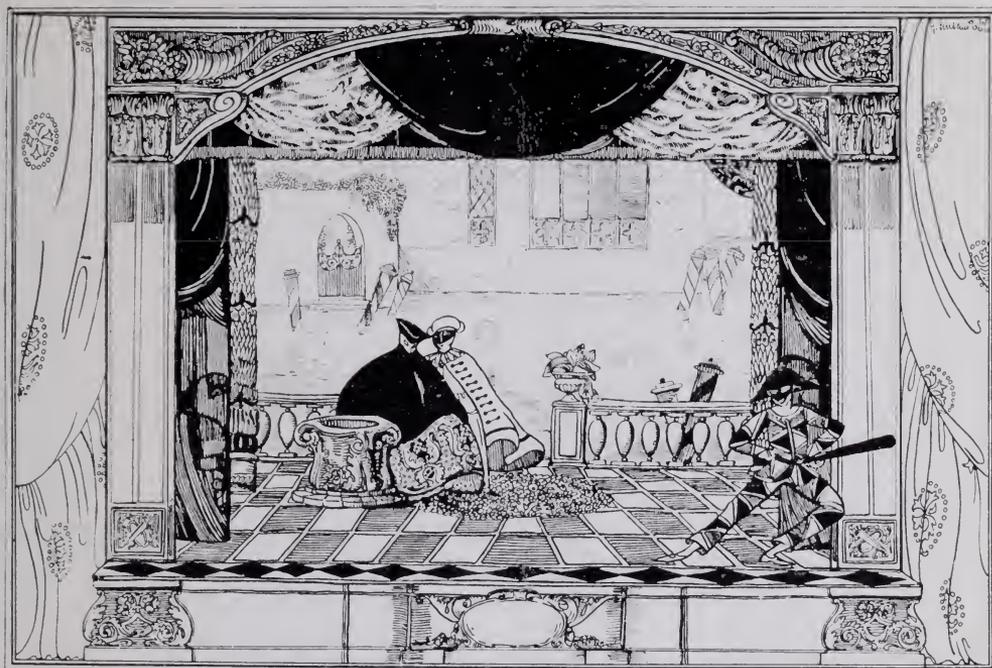
After the long lapse in the manufacture of tapestries these new and modern forms should be especially acceptable. These tapestries are embroidered by hand by the women of Murano, from the drawing of the Venetian artist Zecchin.



Venetian Chinese Secretaire



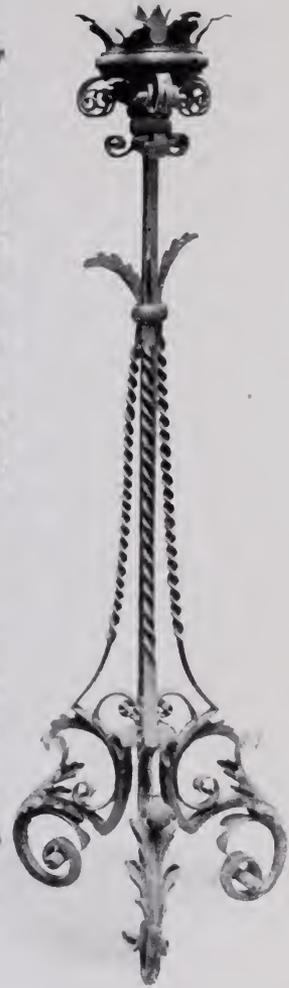
As the art of tapestry and the art of Mosaic, on account of their close imitation of painting, lose themselves through banal and trite expressions, the great decorator of Venice, Galileo Chini, made this drawing for a fountain where the whiteness of marble, the play of water, and the splendor of the Mosaics, unite a magnificent symphony of color. The Exposition shows how the Venetian artists have interpreted the design of Chini.



Now that the marionettes, deserted by the boys who prefer the rifle and the aeroplane, are again in favor in the fashionable salons, this little theatre, painted in an hour of amusement, by a great painter represented at the Ufizi Gallery, will certainly be dear to the heart of some very young lady, contemporary of the Louis XV.



While the men wrought in steel, the women sighed and worked with their needles. This embroidery and many more that we exhibit were fashioned under the loving supervision of Donna Luisa Marinoni, during the months of the terrible bombardment, in the great hall of the glorious theatre "La Fenice," which was transformed into the headquarters of "The Municipal Committee of Assistance in Venice."



In this furniture, carved with such care, does one not remember the Gothic feeling of the lines of the Ca' d' Oro? It was made by refugees in Tuscany.



This is an example, fanciful and charming, of the lacquered furniture. The connoisseur will here find all the grace of the Venetian work of the 17th century; even those cracks which time gives to the old paintings.



This fountain, a masterpiece of Prof. Achille Tamburlini, of Venice, had the honor of decorating the walls of one of the rooms at the International Exposition of Art in Venice. Pure and perfect revival of Byzantine Art in rare marbles.



Room of Juliet and Romeo. This apartment, with its ceiling shaped like a keel of a ship, with its walls of tiles, and the Gothic pancali, recalls a Venetian room of the 15th century. Instead of the ordinary scenes of court life, which generally decorate the walls of that epoch, the room is ornamented with motives representing the romantic history of Romeo and Juliet. This room was designed by Prof. Giuseppe Gerola; the celebrated painter Miolato painted the panels; the artist Scattolono superintended the execution in wood. The room was shown at the Exposition at Rome in 1911, where it awakened the interest and admiration of all visitors.



Secrétaire of the 18th century, Venetian, decorated with painted and embossed figures of a most beautiful form and good condition. A rare example of the period.



Carved Walnut Secrétaire. The constructive instincts of the Venetians which gave palaces strength enough to withstand the power of the water and delicate as a Burano lace, have given to their interior furniture an architectural quality tempered with an exquisite sense of decoration and coloring.



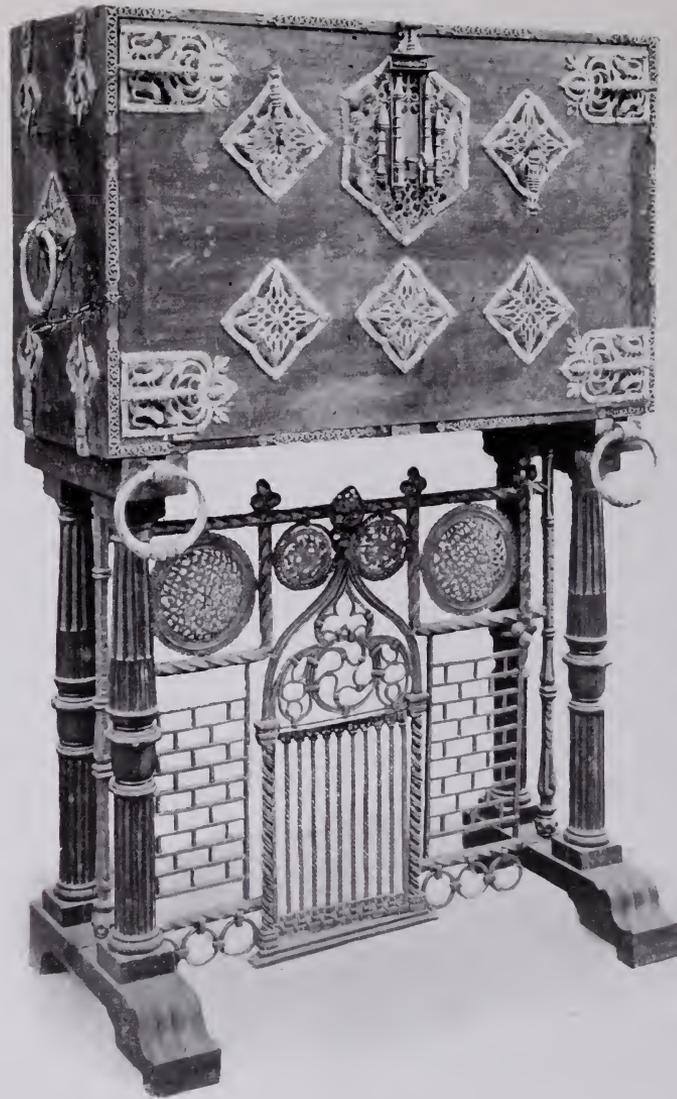
Many women worked on this for more than six months. It is embroidered entirely by hand in point Burano with exquisite delicacy and is the most beautiful work of its kind that has been made in Venice for many years.



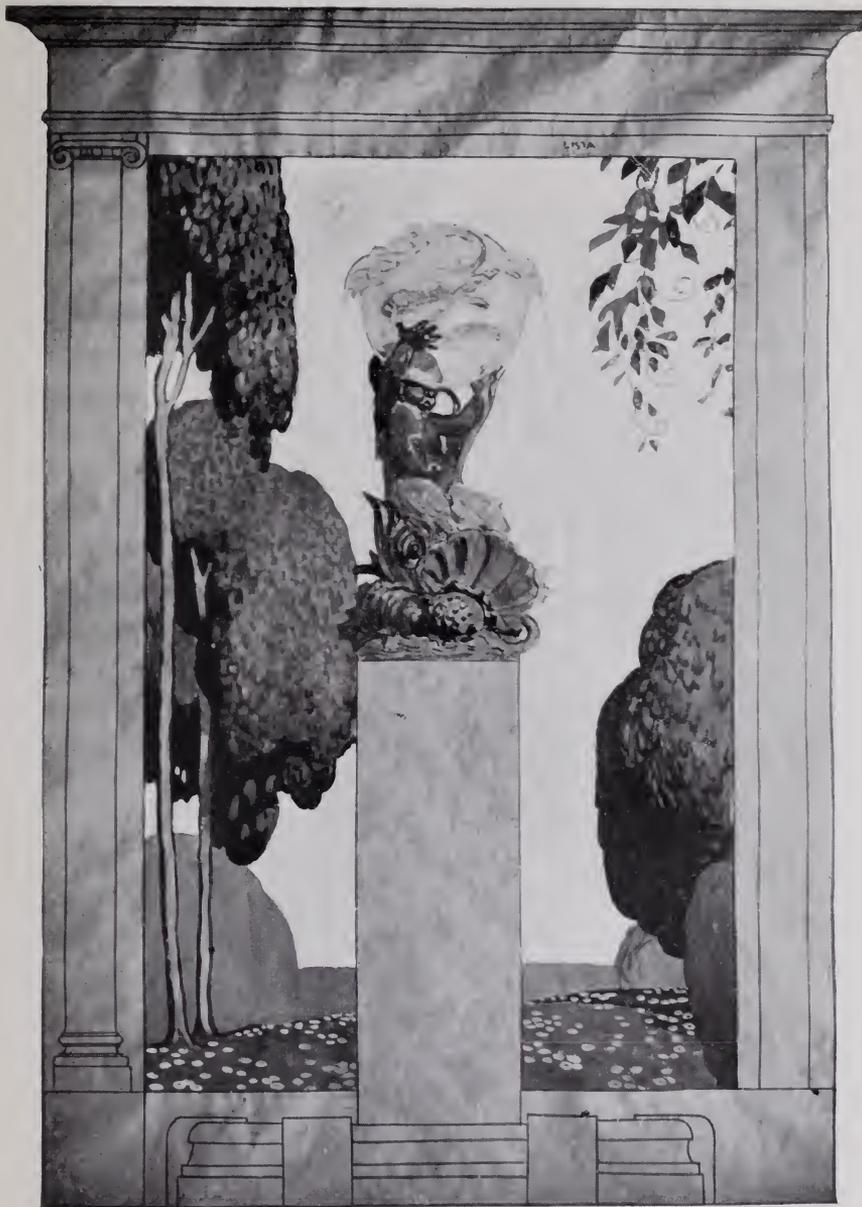
A piece of furniture with a bas-relief so minute as to seem like a picture. Lorenzo Ghiberti would not desire greater praise for the bas-reliefs of his doors.



A characteristically beautiful piece of Venetian furniture of the period of Louis XV, inlaid with colored woods and ivory.



Spanish motif decorated with gilded wrought iron. This was shown at the Exposition of Venice.



A garden fountain in Mosaic. Upon a base of Jasper the bronze cupid supported by a glass globe, from which flows a stream of water into the basin. A beautiful work which represents a strong trend toward a new form of decorative art.



A beautiful Venetian beaded bag, rich as a tapestry and soft as a silk.



The coffer of wrought iron and silver bearing the coats of arms of all the Venetian towns, offered by the Venetian artisans to the City of New York.

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