

of the Boers of S. Africa, and in the cultivation of the land, they seem to remind us of the time 'when Adam delved and Eve span.' I saw only one plough at work, between Bologna and Venice, and that was drawn by four yoke of beautiful steel-grey oxen—a woman leading the foremost yoke with a string.

And now we have come to Mestre, on the sea, and to the bridge—four miles long—that forms the only land approach to the "Queen of the Adriatic." We are in good luck, for the tide is in and that has much to do with the realizing your own and other people's dreams of that "glorious city in the sea." To see for the first time its towers, and domes, and palaces rising out of the water is indeed a rare sight. The bridge is supported by granite arches resting on piles. The whole city, covering a cluster of small islands only a few feet above high-water level, rests on piles driven into the mud. I was told that the church of *Maria Salute* stands upon twelve hundred thousand piles! How many square miles of forest must have been cut down, that this city of 140,000 inhabitants might have a secure foundation? Let the reader imagine himself at the railway station. You walk down a broad flight of steps to the water's edge and hail a gondola. In all that most unique city in the world there is not a wheeled carriage, not a horse, not a cow, not even a donkey. The gondola is the only conveyance. There are four thousand gondolas, it is said, in Venice. The ordinary gondolas, which take the place of our cabs and private carriages, are all of one pattern, about thirty-five feet long and five feet wide amidships, tapering towards either end like a canoe. The cabin in the centre is nicely cushioned and carpeted and enclosed with glass doors and windows. All are painted black, and to complete their funereal appearance, a pall of black cloth is usually thrown over the roof. The gondolier stands up to his work in the stern, using but one oar, and handles his strange craft with amazing skill. The omnibus gondola is similar, but on a larger scale, and takes the place of our street railway carriage, conveying you from place to place for a few cents. Some are adapted for the transport of merchandize, while others are fitted up as floating shops. To reach the *Hotel Monaco*, we had to go about three

miles by gondola, twice crossing the Grand Canal which runs the whole length of the city in the form of the letter S. Near the centre of the city it is crossed by the *Ponte Rialto*, a magnificent arch, of a hundred feet span, surmounted by a double row of shops and lavishly ornamented with stone carvings.

It was on the fifth of March, about eight o'clock in the evening, when our gondola drew up at the hotel door. I shall never forget how smoothly and silently we threaded our way through these water-ways, nor the fairy-like appearance of the scene where we landed. The moon was near the full. In front of us was the harbour, a broad expanse of shimmering waters. Great ships and ocean steamers were lying at anchor. Gondolas decked out with coloured lights flitted about like phantom skiffs in all directions. Music, vocal and instrumental, mingling with the chiming of church bells, floated over the tide. The temperature was delicious. This was the Venice of poetic fancy, and no mistake,—

"A gem set in the silver sea."

We walked out, for there are handsome streets and tempting shops in Venice, as well as canals, and encountered vast crowds of people promenading in St. Mark's square, which was ablaze with the electric light.

Early next morning we visited the cathedral—the most singularly impressive building we had yet seen, one which, while it sets all ideas of architectural propriety at defiance, is yet a thing of beauty, incomparable with any other sacred edifice on earth. The whole building, and it is not a small one, is covered, inside and out, with the most costly materials—precious stones, mosaics, statuary and frescoes. It is crowned with a dozen glittering domes and cupolas. Over the main entrance are the four famous gilt horses, as large as life, that first adorned a temple in Athens, then in Rome, and that were carried off by Napoleon to Paris. High up among the statuary, on one of the outside walls, you see a small flickering lamp burning. It has burned there for two hundred years in memory of a poor man who was put to death for a murder which he never committed—another man on his death-bed having confessed that he was the murderer. Many tame doves have from time imme-