

with the dark-coloured stocks on which are erected the skeletons of polaccas and feluccas in course of construction; the white line showing so bright in the sun is the Riva dei Schiavoni, all alive with its world of gondoliers, fruit-sellers, Greek sailors, and Chioggiotes in their many-coloured costumes.

Looking over the bow, the traveller has facing him the Grand Canal, with the Custom House, where the figure of Fortune veers with the wind above her golden ball; beyond rise the double domes of the Salute, with their great reversed consoles, forming the most majestic entrance to this watery avenue bordered by palaces. He who comes for the first time to Venice by this route realizes a dream—his only dream perhaps ever destined to be surpassed by the reality; and if he knows how to enjoy the beauty of nature, if he can take delight in silvery-gray and rose-coloured reflections in water, if he loves light and colour, the picturesque life of Italian squares and streets, the good humour of the people and their gentle speech, like the twittering of birds, let him only allow himself to live for a little time under the sky of Venice, and he has before him a season of happiness without alloy.

But if, instead of entering Venice by the Adriatic, the visitor comes from France or the Peninsula, and crosses at night the long viaduct which connects the town with the mainland, what a strange impres-

sion he will receive! To glide silently in the middle of the night over still, black waters, to see glimmering lanterns flitting right and left, to hear the splash of an oar on the water, to glide between high banks of architecture, processions of palaces that flit by, more felt than seen, as in an etching of Piranesi—to pass under bridges,



DELIVERY OF GOODS BY BOAT.

hear cries without catching their meaning, every moment to brush past those sombre catafalques, which are other gondolas gliding through the darkness as silently as your own—then, from time to time, to see as in a flash of lightning the outline of a figure leaning forward on its oar, a lamp burning and casting a keen reflection at the corner of a winding canal, a window