

was not altogether intelligible to David, who thought rather of taking a cab; but soon his meaning was apparent. For on emerging from the station, the party found themselves not on a street, but a canal; while before them there was a large number of gondolas, with that peculiar shape which had become familiar to their eyes from pictures. Some of these were of large size, and had the word *Omnibus* painted on the outside. All the rest were painted black, and had a little cabin at the stern, with a canopy over it formed of black cloth. One of these Vernon had engaged.

"I hope you will pardon me, Miss Lee," said Vernon, approaching Gracie with a pleasant smile, "if I do not stand upon ceremony. But in the cars I couldn't help hearing what you said; and as I know all about this country, it occurred to me that I could be of service to you towards finding your aunt. I know the chief of police here, and I can get them to send off messengers to Verona — that is, if your aunt does not turn up. Meanwhile I can make myself useful by showing you where the hotel is. My mother is living here, and I think she knows some of your people in Boston, and I'm sure you would like to see her. You know Venice is like a ship at sea, and we Americans who live here always feel our hearts grow warm towards any of our fellow-countrymen."

It was quite evident that Vernon's last words were true as far as regarded one at least of the