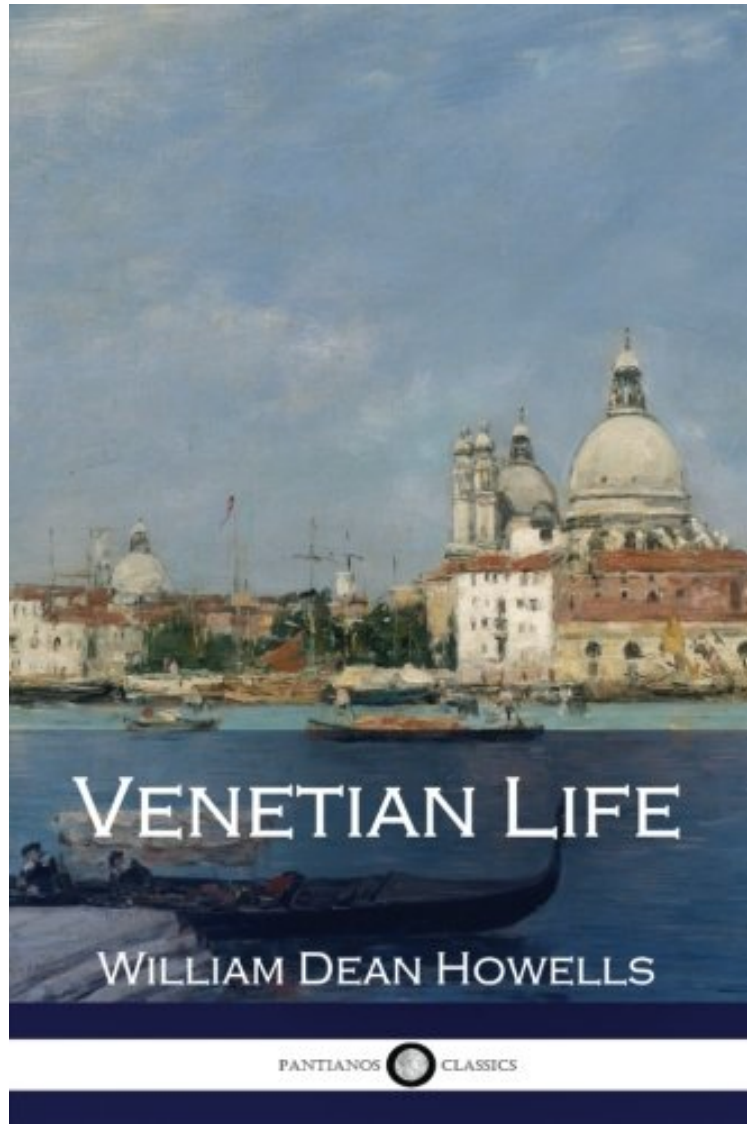


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Venetian Life (Illustrated)

William Dean Howells
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William Dean Howells : Venetian Life (Illustrated) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Venetian Life (Illustrated):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Although some of the historical parts of the book are ...By Steven SpitalnikAlthough some of the historical parts of the book are somewhat hard going, overall it is a lovely, evocative memoir of his time in Venice during our Civil War. His wry sense of humor and light writing style are both lovely. Interestingly, many of the places he visits and things he does have hardly changed since then and can still be

experienced today in Venice, particularly the opportunity to spend hours at the Caffè Florian watching the crowds and listening to the music.² of 2 people found the following review helpful. Venice Exposed, Explained and AppreciatedBy propertiusThis is not a travelogue but rather a description of life in the Republic of Venice, circa 1861-1864 from someone who lives there continually as the American Ambassador to the Republic of Venice. What is most fascinating is the dual attention paid to Venetian life and American sensibilities to what he observes. It is intriguing is the almost fleeting comments he makes which show us that the Venice he lived in, is not the Venice of today, e.g. he goes in great detail, but never boring about the "scaldino" or the Venetian who is proud because he speaks Italian as well as the Venetian dialect. Too numerous to mention but let it suffice that if anyone wants to understand the reality of the last days of the Venetian Republic he will find it here. As a corollary to this, the reader should read "Italian Hours" by Henry James written about the period immediately after Mr. Howells' stay there. It is a shame that our current crop of diplomats does not measure up to Mr. Howells, or travel writers do not possess the acumen and insightfulness of him. If you think that you may be put off by a Victorian gentleman's short-sightedness, fear not. Who else could write a book with chapters such as XIX- Love-Making and Marrying, XX Venetian Traits and Characters, without appealing to purient interests or sociological aphorisms.¹ of 1 people found the following review helpful. very entertainingBy George S. BoatrightI really enjoyed this. I've been to Venice a few times and it was interesting to read about Venice in the 1860s. William Dean Howells is one of those writers I've heard of but never actually read. The only problem I had was this edition seems to be missing the last 1%--it ends very abruptly. I haven't been able to find a printed edition.

This edition of *Venetian Life*, William Dean Howells' classic account of the beautiful Italian city famous for its majestic architecture and canals, is published with illustrations of the locations described. Howells' account tells of Venice as it was during the mid-19th century. Since that time, the city has made painstaking efforts to preserve its ancient buildings and canals; as such, many of Howells' observations remain current today. Those that aren't however constitute eye-opening accounts of how Venice was; the past traditions and customs of its people when it came to matters of trade, marriage, social events and conduct. Many of the venues Howells describes today fit the description of 'hidden gems'; small but beautiful churches which remain open yet are secluded from the bustle of the tourism hot spots. His profiles of Venice as both a summer and winter holiday destination give fine insight into a spirit of hospitality which many present-day Venetians strive to preserve. His explanations of the principle destinations, such as the Venetian opera house (Teatro La Fenice) and St. Mark's Square are eloquent and detailed, surpassing many modern travel guides with their intellectually informed and detailed tone. Howells also profiles the Venetian peoples themselves, describing their traits, behaviors and customs with affection and respect. *Venetian Life* is thus a valuable text for travelers soon to journey to Venice who desire a historical perspective on the beautiful city from a man who spent his life captivated by it. Should you be a scholar of art or architecture looking for an informed overview of Venice's myriad accomplishments in these fields, Howells' abilities as an author will not disappoint as an introduction.

From the Back CoverIn 1860, W. D. Howells wrote a campaign biography of Abraham Lincoln. When Lincoln won the presidency, Howells was rewarded with the job of consul in Venice. He arrived there in 1862, aged twenty-five, and lived for three years on the Grand Canal. Howells would use the canal for a morning swim during the warmer months and then, perhaps, go off to his office. For a young nineteenth-century American who had left school at age nine in order to work, the hardest part of his sinecure was that--no doubt for the first time in his experience--he had almost nothing to do. "I dreaded the easily formed habit of receiving a salary for no service performed," he wrote. "I reminded myself that, soon or late, I must go back to the old fashion of earning money, and that it had better be sooner than later." And so--"though for some strange reasons it was the saddest and strangest thing in the world to do"--Howells left Venice. While he was on the whole happy to do so, Howells said upon his departure, "Never had the city seemed so dream-like and unreal as in this light of farewell." *Venetian Life* flows from the enchantment, the magical improbability of the years Howells spent in that magnificent city dining with the rich, mingling with the humble, and reporting on it all with a uniquely American wit and curiosity.
About the AuthorW. D. Howells (1837-1920) is one of America's most important men of letters. In addition to writing such classics as *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (Norton, 1982) and *Italian Journeys* (Marlboro Books/Northwestern, 1999), Howells served as editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper's* and authored novels, dramas, autobiographical works, and books of travel.