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Venice is in that sense the purest city of all. It is invariably associated with dream. Henry James described his sojourn in Venice as a "beautiful dream." "Venice," he wrote, "is quite the Venice of one's dreams, but it remains strangely the Venice of dreams, more than of any appreciable reality."

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Venice was itself a city of miracles. No city in Europe, with the possible exception of Rome, has witnessed so many. The survival of Venice itself, on the waters, was deemed to be a miracle.

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