

# **A FOREGONE CONCLUSION**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649242511

A foregone conclusion by W. D. Howells

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**W. D. HOWELLS**

**A FOREGONE  
CONCLUSION**



# A FOREGONE CONCLUSION.

BY

W. D. HOWELLS,

AUTHOR OF "VENETIAN LIFE," "THEIR WEDDING JOURNEY,"  
"A CHANCE ACQUAINTANCE," ETC.

BOSTON:

JAMES R. OSGOOD AND COMPANY.

LATE TICKNOR & FIELDS, AND FIELDS, OSGOOD, & Co.

131 FRANKLIN STREET.

1875.

**UGL - MOFFITT**

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1874, by  
W. D. HOWELL,  
In the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

RIVERSIDE, CAMBRIDGE:  
STEREOTYPED AND PRINTED BY  
H. O. DOUGHTON AND COMPANY

PS2025

F6

~~UNDERGRAD~~

~~LIBRARY~~

MAIN

## A FOREGONE CONCLUSION.



### I.

As Don Ippolito passed down the long narrow *calle* or footway leading from the Campo San Stefano to the Grand Canal in Venice, he peered anxiously about him: now turning for a backward look up the *calle*, where there was no living thing in sight but a cat on a garden gate; now running a quick eye along the palace walls that rose vast on either hand and notched the slender strip of blue sky visible overhead with the lines of their jutting balconies, chimneys, and cornices; and now glancing toward the canal, where he could see the noiseless black boats meeting and passing. There was no sound in the *calle* save his own footfalls and the harsh scream of a parrot that hung in the sunshine in one of the loftiest windows; but the note of a peasant crying pots of pinks and roses in the campo came softened to Don Ippolito's sense, and he heard the gondoliers as they hoarsely jested together and gossiped, with the canal between them, at the next gondola station.

The first tenderness of spring was in the air, though down in that *calle* there was yet enough of

the wintry rawness to chill the tip of Don Ippolito's sensitive nose, which he rubbed for comfort with a handkerchief of dark blue calico, and polished for ornament with a handkerchief of white linen. He restored each to a different pocket in the sides of the ecclesiastical *talare*, or gown, reaching almost to his ankles, and then clutched the pocket in which he had replaced the linen handkerchief, as if to make sure that something he prized was safe within. He paused abruptly, and, looking at the doors he had passed, went back a few paces and stood before one over which hung, slightly tilted forward, an oval sign painted with the effigy of an eagle, a bundle of arrows, and certain thunderbolts, and bearing the legend, CONSULATE OF THE UNITED STATES, in neat characters. Don Ippolito gave a quick sigh, hesitated a moment, and then seized the bell-pull and jerked it so sharply that it seemed to thrust out, like a part of the mechanism, the head of an old serving-woman at the window above him.

"Who is there?" demanded this head.

"Friends," answered Don Ippolito in a rich, sad voice.

"And what do you command?" further asked the old woman.

Don Ippolito paused, apparently searching for his voice, before he inquired, "Is it here that the Consul of America lives?"

"Precisely."

"Is he perhaps at home?"



"I don't know. I will go ask him."

"Do me that pleasure, dear," said Don Ippolito, and remained knotting his fingers before the closed door. Presently the old woman returned, and looking out long enough to say, "The consul is at home," drew some inner bolt by a wire running to the lock, that let the door start open; then, waiting to hear Don Ippolito close it again, she called out from her height, "Favor me above." He climbed the dim stairway to the point where she stood, and followed her to a door, which she flung open into an apartment so brightly lit by a window looking on the sunny canal, that he blinked as he entered. "Signor Console," said the old woman, "behold the gentleman who desired to see you;" and at the same time Don Ippolito, having removed his broad, stiff, three-cornered hat, came forward and made a beautiful bow. He had lost for the moment the trepidation which had marked his approach to the consulate, and bore himself with graceful dignity.

It was in the first year of the war, and from a motive of patriotism common at that time, Mr. Ferris (one of my many predecessors in office at Venice) had just been crossing his two silken gondola flags above the consular bookcase, where with their gilt lance-headed staves, and their vivid stars and stripes, they made a very pretty effect. He filliped a little dust from his coat, and begged Don Ippolito to be seated, with the air of putting even a Venetian priest on a footing of equality with other

men under the folds of the national banner. Mr. Ferris had the prejudice of all Italian sympathizers against the priests; but for this he could hardly have found anything in Don Ippolito to alarm dislike. His face was a little thin, and the chin was delicate; the nose had a fine, Dantesque curve, but its final droop gave a melancholy cast to a countenance expressive of a gentle and kindly spirit; the eyes were large and dark and full of a dreamy warmth. Don Ippolito's prevailing tint was that transparent blueishness which comes from much shaving of a heavy black beard; his forehead and temples were marble white; he had a tonsure the size of a dollar. He sat silent for a little space, and softly questioned the consul's face with his dreamy eyes. Apparently he could not gather courage to speak of his business at once, for he turned his gaze upon the window and said, "A beautiful position, Signor Console."

"Yes, it's a pretty place," answered Mr. Ferris, warily.

"So much pleasanter here on the Canalazzo than on the campos or the little canals."

"Oh, without doubt."

"Here there must be constant amusement in watching the boats: great stir, great variety, great life. And now the fine season commences, and the Signor Console's countrymen will be coming to Venice. Perhaps," added Don Ippolito with a polite dismay, and an air of sudden anxiety to

escape from his own purpose, "I may be disturbing or detaining the Signor Console?"

"No," said Mr. Ferris; "I am quite at leisure for the present. In what can I have the honor of serving you?"

Don Ippolito heaved a long, ineffectual sigh, and taking his linen handkerchief from his pocket, wiped his forehead with it, and rolled it upon his knee. He looked at the door, and all round the room, and then rose and drew near the consul, who had officially seated himself at his desk.

"I suppose that the Signor Console gives passports?" he asked.

"Sometimes," replied Mr. Ferris, with a clouding face.

Don Ippolito seemed to note the gathering distrust and to be helpless against it. He continued hastily: "Could the Signor Console give a passport for America . . . to me?"

"Are you an American citizen?" demanded the consul in the voice of a man whose suspicions are fully roused.

"American citizen?"

"Yes; subject of the American republic."

"No, surely; I have not that happiness. I am an Austrian subject," returned Don Ippolito a little bitterly, as if the last words were an unpleasant morsel in the mouth.

"Then I can't give you a passport," said Mr. Ferris, somewhat more gently. "You know," he