III.

CAGLIARI.

There is a very little crowd waiting on the quay: mostly men with their hands in their pockets. But, thank Heaven, they have a certain aloofness and reserve. They are not like the tourist-parasites of these post-war days, who move to the attack with a terrifying cold vindictiveness the moment one emerges from any vehicle. And some of these men look really poor. There are no poor Italians any more: at least, loafers.

Strange the feeling round the harbour: as if everybody had gone away. Yet there are people about. It is "festa" however, Epiphany. But it is so different from Sicily: none of the suave Greek-Italian charms, none of the airs and graces, none of the glamour. Rather bare, rather stark, rather cold and yellow--somehow like Malta, without Malta's foreign liveliness. Thank Goodness no one wants to carry my knapsack. Thank Goodness no one has a fit at the sight of it. Thank Heaven no one takes any notice. They stand cold and aloof, and don't move.

We make our way through the Customs: then through the Dazio, the City Customs-house. Then we are free. We set off up a steep, new, broad road, with little trees on either side. But stone, arid, new, wide stone, yellowish under the cold sky--and abandoned-seeming. Though, of course, there are people about. The north wind blows bitingly.

We climb a broad flight of steps, always upwards, up the wide, precipitous, dreary boulevard with sprouts of trees. Looking for the Hotel, and dying with hunger.

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At last we find it, the Scala di Ferro: through a courtyard with green plants. And at last a little man with lank, black hair, like an esquimo, comes smiling. He is one brand of Sardinian--esquimo looking. There is no room with two beds: only single rooms. And thus we are led off, if you please, to the "bagnio": the bathing-establishment wing, on the dank ground floor. Cubicles on either side a stone passage, and in every cubicle a dark stone bath, and a little bed. We can have each a little bath cubicle. If there's nothing else for it, there isn't: but it seems dank and cold and horrid, underground. And one thinks of all the unsavory "assignations" at these old bagnio places. True, at the end of the passage are seated two carabinieri. But whether to ensure respectibility or not, Heaven knows. We are in the baths, that's all.

The esquimo returns after five minutes, however. There is a bedroom in the house. He is pleased, because he didn't like putting us into the bagnio. Where he found the bedroom I don't know. But there it was, large, sombre, cold, and over the kitchen fumes of a small inner court like a well. But perfectly clean and all right. And the people seemed warm and good-natured, like human beings. One has got so used to the

non-human ancient-souled Sicilians, who are suave and so completely callous.

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After a really good meal we went out to see the town. It was after three o'clock and everywhere was shut up like an English Sunday. Cold, stony Cagliari: in summer you must be sizzling hot, Cagliari, like a kiln. The men stood about in groups, but without the intimate Italian watchfulness that never leaves a passer-by alone.

Strange, stony Cagliari. We climbed up a street like a corkscrew stairway. And we saw announcements of a children's fancy-dress ball. Cagliari is very steep. Half-way up there is a strange place called the bastions, a large, level space like a drill-ground with trees, curiously suspended over the town, and sending off a long shoot like a wide viaduct, across above the corkscrew street that comes climbing up. Above this bastion place the town still rises steeply to the Cathedral and the fort. What is so curious is that this terrace or bastion is so large, like some big recreation ground, that it is almost dreary, and one cannot understand its being suspended in mid-air. Down below is the little circle of the harbour. To the left a low, malarial-looking sea plain, with tufts of palm trees and Arab-looking houses. From this runs out the long spit of land towards that black-and-white watch-fort, the white road trailing forth. On the right, most curiously, a long strange spit of sand runs in a causeway far across the shallows of the bay, with

the open sea on one hand, and vast, end-of-the-world lagoons on the other. There are peaky, dark mountains beyond this--just as across the vast bay are gloomy hills. It is a strange, strange landscape: as if here the world left off. The bay is vast in itself; and all these curious things happening at its head: this curious, craggy-studded town, like a great stud of house-covered rock jutting up out of the bay flats: around it on one side the weary, Arab-looking palm-desolated malarial plain, and on the other side great salt lagoons, dead beyond the sand-bar: these backed again by serried, clustered mountains, suddenly, while away beyond the plain, hills rise to sea again. Land and sea both seem to give out, exhausted, at the bay head: the world's end. And into this world's end starts up Cagliari, and on either side, sudden, serpent-crest hills.

But it still reminds me of Malta: lost between Europe and Africa and belonging to nowhere. Belonging to nowhere, never having belonged to anywhere. To Spain and the Arabs and the Phoenicians most. But as if it had never really had a fate. No fate. Left outside of time and history.

The spirit of the place is a strange thing. Our mechanical age tries to override it. But it does not succeed. In the end the strange, sinister spirit of the place, so diverse and adverse in differing places, will smash our mechanical oneness into smithereens, and all that we think the real thing will go off with a pop, and we shall be left staring.

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On the great parapet above the Municipal Hall and above the corkscrew high-street a thick fringe of people is hanging, looking down. We go to look too: and behold, below there is the entrance to the ball. Yes, there is a china shepherdess in pale blue and powdered hair, crook, ribbons, Marie Antoinette satin daintiness and all, slowly and haughtily walking up the road, and gazing superbly round. She is not more than twelve years old, moreover. Two servants accompany her. She gazes supremely from right to left as she goes, mincingly, and I would give her the prize for haughtiness. She is perfect--a little too haughty for Watteau, but "marquise" to a T. The people watch in silence. There is no yelling and screaming and running. They watch in a suitable silence.

Comes a carriage with two fat bay horses slithering, almost swimming up the corkscrew high-street. That in itself is a "tour-de-force": for Cagliari doesn't have carriages. Imagine a street like a corkscrew stair, paved with slippery stone. And imagine two bay horses rowing their way up it: they did not walk a single stride. But they arrived. And there fluttered out three strangely exquisite children, two frail, white satin Pierrots and a white satin Pierrette. They were like fragile winter butterflies with black spots. They had a curious, indefinable remote elegance, something conventional and "fin-de-siècle". But not our century. The wonderful artificial delicacy of the eighteenth. The boys had big, perfect ruffs round their necks: and behind were slung old,

cream-colored Spanish shawls, for warmth. They were frail as tobacco flowers, and with remote, cold elegance they fluttered by the carriage, from which emerged a large black-satin Mama. Fluttering their queer little butterfly feet on the pavement, hovering round the large Mama like three frail-tissued ghosts, they found their way past the solid, seated Carabinieri into the hall.

Arrived a primrose-brocade beau, with ruffles, and his hat under his arm: about twelve years old. Walking statelily, without a qualm up the steep twist of the street. Or perhaps so perfect in his self-consciousness that it became an elegant "aplomb" in him. He was a genuine eighteenth-century exquisite, rather stiffer than the French, maybe, but completely in the spirit. Curious, curious children! They had a certain stand-offish superbness, and not a single trace of misgiving. For them, their "noblesse" was indisputable. For the first time in my life I recognized the true cold superbness of the old "noblesse". They had not a single qualm about their own perfect representing of the higher order of being.

Followed another white satin "marquise", with a maid-servant. They are strong on the eighteenth century in Cagliari. Perhaps it is the last bright reality to them. The nineteenth hardly counts.

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Curious the children in Cagliari. The poor seem thoroughly

poor-bare-footed urchins, gay and wild in the narrow dark streets. But the more well-to-do children are so fine: so extraordinarily elegantly dressed. It quite strikes one of a heap. Not so much the grown-ups. The children. All the "chic," all the fashion, all the originality is expended on the children. And with a great deal of success. Better than Kensington Gardens very often. And they promenade with Papa and Mama with such alert assurance, having quite brought it off, their fashionable get-up. Who would have expected it?

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Oh narrow, dark, and humid streets going up to the Cathedral, like crevices. I narrowly miss a huge pail of slop-water which comes crashing down from heaven. A small boy who was playing in the street, and whose miss is not quite a clean miss, looks up with that naïve, impersonal wonder with which children stare at a star or a lamp-lighter.

The Cathedral must have been a fine old pagan stone fortress once. Now it has come, as it were, through the mincing machine of the ages, and oozed out baroque and sausagey, a bit like the horrible baldachins in St. Peter's at Rome. None the less it is homely and hole-and-cornery, with a rather ragged high mass trailing across the pavement towards the high altar, since it is almost sunset, and Epiphany. It feels as if one might squat in a corner and play marbles and eat bread and cheese and be at home: a comfortable old-time churchey feel.

There is some striking filet lace on the various altar-cloths. And St. Joseph must be a prime saint. He has an altar and a verse of invocation praying for the dying.

"Oh, St. Joseph, true potential father of Our Lord." What can it profit a man, I wonder, to be the potential father of anybody! For the rest I am not Baedeker.

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The top of Cagliari is the fortress: the old gate, the old ramparts, of honey-combed, fine yellowish sandstone. Up in a great sweep goes the rampart wall, Spanish and splendid, dizzy. And the road creeping down again at the foot, down the back of the hill. There lies the country: that dead plain with its bunch of palms and a fainting sea, and inland again, hills. Cagliari must be on a single, loose, lost bluff of rock.

From the terrace just below the fortress, above the town, not behind it, we stand and look at the sunset. It is all terrible, taking place beyond the knotted, serpent-crested hills that lie, bluey and velvety, beyond the waste lagoons. Dark, sultry, heavy crimson the west is, hanging sinisterly, with those gloomy blue cloud-bars and cloud-banks drawn across. All behind the blue-gloomy peaks stretches the curtain of sinister, smouldering red, and away to the sea. Deep below lie the sea-meres. They seem miles and miles, and utterly waste. But the sand-bar crosses like a bridge, and has a road. All the air is dark, a

sombre bluish tone. The great west burns inwardly, sullenly, and gives no glow, yet a deep red. It is cold.

We go down the steep streets, smelly, dark, dank, and very cold. No wheeled vehicle can scramble up them, presumably. People live in one room. Men are combing their hair or fastening their collars in the doorways. Evening is here, and it is a feast day.

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At the bottom of the street we come to a little bunch of masked youths, one in a long yellow frock and a frilled bonnet, another like an old woman, another in red twill. They are arm in arm and are accosting the passers-by. The q-b gives a cry, and looks for escape. She has a terror of maskers, a terror that comes from childhood. To say the truth, so have I. We hasten invisibly down the far side of the street, and come out under the bastions. Then we go down our own familiar wide, short, cold boulevard to the sea.

At the bottom, again, is a carriage with more maskers. Carnival is beginning. A man dressed as a peasant woman in native costume is clambering with his great wide skirts and wide strides on to the box, and, flourishing his ribboned whip, is addressing a little crowd of listeners. He opens his mouth wide and goes on with a long yelling harangue of taking a drive with his mother--another man in old-woman's gaudy finery and wig who sits already bobbing on the box. The would-be

daughter flourishes, yells, and prances up there on the box of the carriage. The crowd listens attentively and mildly smiles. It all seems real to them. The q-b hovers in the distance, half-fascinated, and watches. With a great flourish of whip and legs--showing his frilled drawers--the masker pulls round to drive along the boulevard by the sea--the only place where one can drive.

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The big street by the sea is the Via Roma. It has the cafés on one side and across the road the thick tufts of trees intervening between the sea and us. Among these thick tufts of sea-front trees the little steam tram, like a little train, bumps to rest, after having wound round the back of the town.

The Via Roma is all social Cagliari. Including the cafés with their outdoor tables on the one side of the road, and the avenue strand on the other, it is very wide, and at evening it contains the whole town. Here, and here alone carriages can spank along, very slowly, officers can ride, and the people can promenade "en masse."

We were amazed at the sudden crowd we found ourselves amongst--like a short, dense river of people streaming slowly in a mass. There is practically no vehicular traffic--only the steady dense streams of human beings of all sorts, all on a human footing. It must have been something like this in the streets of imperial Rome, where no chariots might drive

and humanity was all on foot.

Little bunches of maskers, and single maskers danced and strutted along in the thick flow under the trees. If you are a mask you don't walk like a human being: you dance and prance along extraordinarily like the life-size marionettes, conducted by wires from above. That is how you go: with that odd jauntiness as if lifted and propelled by wires from the shoulders. In front of me went a charming coloured harlequin, all in diamond-shaped colours, and beautiful as a piece of china. He tripped with the light, fantastic trip, quite alone in the thick crowd, and quite blithe. Came two little children hand in hand in brilliant scarlet and white costumes, sauntering calmly. They did not do the mask trip. After a while a sky-blue girl with a high hat and full skirts, very short, that went flip-flip-flip, as a ballet dancer's, whilst she strutted; after her a Spanish grandee capering like a monkey. They threaded among the slow stream of the crowd. Appeared Dante and Beatrice, in Paradise apparently, all in white sheet-robes, and with silver wreaths on their heads, arm in arm, and prancing very slowly and majestically, yet with the long lilt as if hitched along by wires from above. They were very good: all the well-known vision come to life, Dante incorporate, and white as a shroud, with his tow-haired, silver-crowned, immortal Beatrice on his arm, strutting the dark avenues. He had the nose and cheek-bones and banded cheek, and the stupid wooden look, and offered a modern criticism on the Inferno.

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It had become quite dark, the lamps were lighted. We crossed the road to the Café Roma, and found a table on the pavement among the crowd. In a moment we had our tea. The evening was cold, with ice in the wind. But the crowd surged on, back and forth, back and forth, slowly. At the tables were seated mostly men, taking coffee or vermouth or aqua vitae, all familiar and easy, without the modern self-consciousness. There was a certain pleasant, natural robustness of spirit, and something of a feudal free-and-easiness. Then arrived a family, with children, and nurse in her native costume. They all sat at table together, perfectly easy with one another, though the marvellous nurse seemed to be seated below the salt. She was bright as a poppy, in a rose-scarlet dress of fine cloth, with a curious little waistcoat of emerald green and purple, and a bodice of soft, homespun linen with great full sleeves. On her head she had a rose-scarlet and white head-dress, and she wore great studs of gold filigree, and similar ear-rings. The feudal-bourgeois family drank its syrup-drinks and watched the crowd. Most remarkable is the complete absence of self-consciousness. They all have a perfect natural "sang-froid," the nurse in her marvellous native costume is as thoroughly at her ease as if she were in her own village street. She moves and speaks and calls to a passer-by without the slightest constraint, and much more, without the slightest presumption. She is below the invisible salt, the invisible but insuperable salt. And it strikes me the salt-barrier is a fine thing for both parties: they both remain natural and human on either side of it, instead of becoming devilish, scrambling and pushing at the barricade.

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The crowd is across the road, under the trees near the sea. On this side stroll occasional pedestrians. And I see my first peasant in costume. He is an elderly, upright, handsome man, beautiful in the black-and-white costume. He wears the full-sleeved white shirt and the close black bodice of thick, native frieze, cut low. From this sticks out a short kilt or frill, of the same black frieze, a band of which goes between the legs, between the full loose drawers of coarse linen. The drawers are banded below the knee into tight black frieze gaiters. On his head he has the long black stocking cap, hanging down behind. How handsome he is, and so beautifully male! He walks with his hands loose behind his back, slowly, upright, and aloof. The lovely unapproachableness, indomitable. And the flash of the black and white, the slow stride of the full white drawers, the black gaiters and black cuirass with the bolero, then the great white sleeves and white breast again, and once more the black cap--what marvellous massing of the contrast, marvellous, and superb, as on a magpie.--How beautiful maleness is, if it finds its right expression.--And how perfectly ridiculous it is made in modern clothes.

There is another peasant too, a young one with a swift eye and hard cheek and hard, dangerous thighs. He has folded his stocking cap, so that it comes forward to his brow like a phrygian cap. He wears close knee breeches and close sleeved waistcoat of thick brownish stuff that

looks like leather. Over the waistcoat a sort of cuirass of black, rusty sheepskin, the curly wool outside. So he strides, talking to a comrade. How fascinating it is, after the soft Italians, to see these limbs in their close knee-breeches, so definite, so manly, with the old fierceness in them still. One realises, with horror, that the race of men is almost extinct in Europe. Only Christ-like heroes and woman-worshipping Don Juans, and rabid equality-mongrels. The old, hardy, indomitable male is gone. His fierce singleness is quenched. The last sparks are dying out in Sardinia and Spain. Nothing left but the herd-proletariat and the herd-equality mongrelism, and the wistful poisonous self-sacrificial cultured soul. How detestable.

But that curious, flashing, black-and-white costume! I seem to have known it before: to have worn it even: to have dreamed it. To have dreamed it: to have had actual contact with it. It belongs in some way to something in me--to my past, perhaps. I don't know. But the uneasy sense of blood-familiarity haunts me. I know I have known it before. It is something of the same uneasiness I feel before Mount Eryx: but without the awe this time.

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In the morning the sun was shining from a blue, blue sky, but the shadows were deadly cold, and the wind like a flat blade of ice. We went out running to the sun. The hotel could not give us coffee and milk: only a little black coffee. So we descended to the sea-front again, to

the Via Roma, and to our café. It was Friday: people seemed to be bustling in from the country with huge baskets.

The Café Roma had coffee and milk, but no butter. We sat and watched the movement outside. Tiny Sardinian donkeys, the tiniest things ever seen, trotted their infinitesimal little paws along the road, drawing little wagons like handcarts. Their proportion is so small, that they make a boy walking at their side look like a tall man, while a natural man looks like a Cyclops stalking hugely and cruelly. It is ridiculous for a grown man to have one of these little creatures, hardly bigger than a fly, hauling his load for him. One is pulling a chest of drawers on a cart, and it seems to have a whole house behind it. Nevertheless it plods bravely, away beneath the load, a wee thing.

They tell me there used to be flocks of these donkeys, feeding half wild on the wild, moor-like hills of Sardinia. But the war--and also the imbecile wantonness of the war-masters--consumed these flocks too, so that few are left. The same with the cattle. Sardinia, home of cattle, hilly little Argentine of the Mediterranean, is now almost deserted. It is war, say the Italiana.--And also the wanton, imbecile, foul lavishness of the war-masters. It was not alone the war which exhausted the world. It was the deliberate evil wastefulness of the war-makers in their own countries. Italy ruined Italy.

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Two peasants in black-and-white are strolling in the sun, flashing. And my dream of last evening was not a dream. And my nostalgia for something I know not what was not an illusion. I feel it again, at once, at the sight of the men in frieze and linen, a heart yearning for something I have known, and which I want back again.

It is market day. We turn up the Largo Carlo-Felice, the second wide gap of a street, a vast but very short boulevard, like the end of something. Cagliari is like that: all bits and bobs. And by the side of the pavement are many stalls, stalls selling combs and collar-studs, cheap mirrors, handkerchiefs, shoddy Manchester goods, bed-ticking, boot-paste, poor crockery, and so on. But we see also Madame of Cagliari going marketing, with a servant accompanying her, carrying a huge grass-woven basket: or returning from marketing, followed by a small boy supporting one of these huge grass-woven baskets--like huge dishes--on his head, piled with bread, eggs, vegetables, a chicken, and so forth. Therefore we follow Madame going marketing, and find ourselves in the vast market house, and it fairly glows with eggs: eggs in these great round dish-baskets of golden grass: but eggs in piles, in mounds, in heaps, a Sierra Nevada of eggs, glowing warm white. How they glow! I have never noticed it before. But they give off a warm, pearly effulgence into the air, almost a warmth. A pearly-gold heat seems to come out of them. Myriads of eggs, glowing avenues of eggs.

And they are marked--60 centimes, 65 centimes. Ah, cries the q-b, I must live in Cagliari--For in Sicily the eggs cost 1.50 each.

This is the meat and poultry and bread market. There are stalls of new, various-shaped bread, brown and bright: there are tiny stalls of marvellous native cakes, which I want to taste, there is a great deal of meat and kid: and there are stalls of cheese, all cheeses, all shapes, all whitenesses, all the cream-colours, on into daffodil yellow. Goat cheese, sheeps cheese, Swiss cheese, Parmegiano, stracchino, caciocavallo, torolone, how many cheeses I don't know the names of! But they cost about the same as in Sicily, eighteen francs, twenty francs, twenty-five francs the kilo. And there is lovely ham--thirty and thirty-five francs the kilo. There is a little fresh butter too--thirty or thirty-two francs the kilo. Most of the butter, however, is tinned in Milan. It costs the same as the fresh. There are splendid piles of salted black olives, and huge bowls of green salted olives. There are chickens and ducks and wild-fowl: at eleven and twelve and fourteen francs a kilo. There is mortadella, the enormous Bologna sausage, thick as a church pillar: 16 francs: and there are various sorts of smaller sausage, salami, to be eaten in slices. A wonderful abundance of food, glowing and shining. We are rather late for fish, especially on Friday. But a barefooted man offers us two weird objects from the Mediterranean, which teems with marine monsters.

The peasant women sit behind their wares, their home-woven linen skirts, hugely full, and of various colours, ballooning round them. The yellow baskets give off a glow of light. There is a sense of profusion once more. But alas no sense of cheapness: save the eggs. Every month, up

goes the price of everything.

"I must come and live in Cagliari, to do my shopping here," says the q-b. "I must have one of those big grass baskets."

We went down to the little street--but saw more baskets emerging from a broad flight of stone stairs, enclosed. So up we went-and found ourselves in the vegetable market. Here the q-b was happier still. Peasant women, sometimes barefoot, sat in their tight little bodices and voluminous, coloured skirts behind the piles of vegetables, and never have I seen a lovelier show. The intense deep green of spinach seemed to predominate, and out of that came the monuments of curd-white and black-purple cauliflowers: but marvellous cauliflowers, like a flower-show, the purple ones intense as great bunches of violets. From this green, white, and purple massing struck out the vivid rose-scarlet and blue crimson of radishes, large radishes like little turnips, in piles. Then the long, slim, grey-purple buds of artichokes, and dangling clusters of dates, and piles of sugar-dusty white figs and sombre-looking black figs, and bright burnt figs: basketfuls and basketfuls of figs. A few baskets of almonds, and many huge walnuts. Basket-pans of native raisins. Scarlet peppers like trumpets: magnificent fennels, so white and big and succulent: baskets of new potatoes: scaly kohlrabi: wild asparagus in bunches, yellow-budding sparacelli: big, clean-fleshed carrots: feathery salads with white hearts: long, brown-purple onions and then, of course pyramids of big oranges, pyramids of pale apples, and baskets of brilliant shiny

mandarini, the little tangerine orange with their green-black leaves. The green and vivid-coloured world of fruit-gleams I have never seen in such splendour as under the market roof at Cagliari: so raw and gorgeous. And all quite cheap, the one remaining cheapness, except potatoes. Potatoes of any sort are 1.40 or 1.50 the kilo.

"Oh!" cried the q-b, "If I don't live at Cagliari and come and do my shopping here, I shall die with one of my wishes unfulfilled."

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But out of the sun it was cold, nevertheless. We went into the streets to try and get warm. The sun was powerful. But alas, as in southern towns generally, the streets are sunless as wells.

So the q-b and I creep slowly along the sunny bits, and then perforce are swallowed by shadow. We look at the shops. But there is not much to see. Little, frowsy provincial shops, on the whole.

But a fair number of peasants in the streets, and peasant women in rather ordinary costume: tight-bodiced, volume-skirted dresses of hand-woven linen or thickish cotton. The prettiest is of dark-blue-and-red, stripes-and-lines, intermingled, so made that the dark-blue gathers round the waist into one colour, the myriad pleats hiding all the rosy red. But when she walks, the full-petticoated peasant woman, then the red goes flash-flash-flash, like a bird showing

its colours. Pretty that looks in the sombre street. She has a plain, light bodice with a peak: sometimes a little vest, and great full white sleeves, and usually a handkerchief or shawl loose knotted. It is charming the way they walk, with quick, short steps. When all is said and done, the most attractive costume for women in my eye, is the tight little bodice and the many-pleated skirt, full and vibrating with movement. It has a charm which modern elegance lacks completely--a bird-like play in movement.

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They are amusing, these peasant girls and women: so brisk and defiant. They have straight backs, like little walls, and decided, well-drawn brows. And they are amusingly on the alert. There is no eastern creeping. Like sharp, brisk birds they dart along the streets, and you feel they would fetch you a bang over the head as leave as look at you. Tenderness, thank heaven, does not seem to be a Sardinian quality. Italy is so tender--like cooked macaroni--yards and yards of soft tenderness ravelled round everything. Here men don't idealise women, by the looks of things. Here they don't make these great leering eyes, the inevitable yours-to-command look of Italian males. When the men from the country look at these women, then it is Mind-yourself, my lady. I should think the grovelling Madonna-worship is not much of a Sardinian feature. These women have to look out for themselves, keep their own back-bone stiff and their knuckles hard. Man is going to be male Lord if he can. And woman isn't going to give him too much of his own way, either. So there

you have it, the fine old martial split between the sexes. It is tonic and splendid, really, after so much sticky intermingling and backboneless Madonna-worship. The Sardinian isn't looking for the "noble woman nobly planned." No, thank you. He wants that young madam over there, a young stiff-necked generation that she is. Far better sport than with the nobly-planned sort: hollow frauds that they are. Better sport too than with a Carmen, who gives herself away too much, In these women there is something shy and defiant and un-get-atable. The defiant, splendid split between the sexes, each absolutely determined to defend his side, her side, from assault. So the meeting has a certain wild, salty savour, each the deadly unknown to the other. And at the same time, each his own, her own native pride and courage, taking the dangerous leap and scrambling back.

Give me the old, salty way of love. How I am nauseated with sentiment and nobility, the macaroni slithery-slobbery mess of modern adorations.

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One sees a few fascinating faces in Cagliari: those great dark unlighted eyes. There are fascinating dark eyes in Sicily, bright, big, with an impudent point of light, and a curious roll, and long lashes: the eyes of old Greece, surely. But here one sees eyes of soft, blank darkness, all velvet, with no imp looking out of them. And they strike a stranger, older note: before the soul became self-conscious: before the mentality of Greece appeared in the world. Remote, always remote, as if the

intelligence lay deep within the cave, and never came forward. One searches into the gloom for one second, while the glance lasts. But without being able to penetrate to the reality. It recedes, like some unknown creature deeper into its lair. There is a creature, dark and potent. But what?

Sometimes Velasquez, and sometimes Goya gives us a suggestion of these large, dark, unlighted eyes. And they go with fine, fleecy black hair--almost as fine as fur. I have not seen them north of Cagliari.

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The q-b spies some of the blue-and-red stripe-and-line cotton stuff of which the peasants make their dress: a large roll in the doorway of a dark shop. In we go, and begin to feel it. It is just soft, thickish cotton stuff--twelve francs a metre. Like most peasant patterns, it is much more complicated and subtle than appears: the curious placing of the stripes, the subtle proportion, and a white thread left down one side only of each broad blue block. The stripes, moreover, run across the cloth, not lengthwise with it. But the width would be just long enough for a skirt--though the peasant skirts have almost all a band at the bottom with the stripes running round-ways.

The man--he is the esquimo type, simple, frank and aimiable--says the stuff is made in France, and this the first roll since the war. It is the old, old pattern, quite correct--but the material not quite so

good. The q-b takes enough for a dress.

He shows us also cashmeres, orange, scarlet, sky-blue, royal blue: good, pure-wool cashmeres that were being sent to India, and were captured from a German mercantile sub-marine. So he says. Fifty francs a metre--very, very wide. But they are too much trouble to carry in a knapsack, though their brilliance fascinates.

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So we stroll and look at the shops, at the filigree gold jewelling of the peasants, at a good bookshop. But there is little to see and therefore the question is, shall we go on? Shall we go forward?

There are two ways of leaving Cagliari for the north: the State railway that runs up the west side of the island, and the narrow-gauge secondary railway that pierces the centre. But we are too late for the big trains. So we will go by the secondary railway, wherever it goes.

There is a train at 2.30, and we can get as far as Mandas, some fifty miles in the interior. When we tell the queer little waiter at the hotel, he says he comes from Mandas, and there are two inns. So after lunch--a strictly fish menu--we pay our bill. It comes to sixty odd francs--for three good meals each, with wine, and the night's lodging, this is cheap, as prices now are in Italy.

Pleased with the simple and friendly Scala di Ferre, I shoulder my sack and we walk off to the second station. The sun is shining hot this afternoon--burning hot, by the sea. The road and the buildings look dry and desiccated, the harbour rather weary and end of the world.

There is a great crowd of peasants at the little station. And almost every man has a pair of woven saddle-bags--a great flat strip of coarse-woven wool, with flat pockets at either end, stuffed with purchases. These are almost the only carrying bags. The men sling them over their shoulder, so that one great pocket hangs in front, one behind.

These saddle bags are most fascinating. They are coarsely woven in bands of raw black-rusty wool, with varying bands of raw white wool or hemp or cotton--the bands and stripes of varying widths going cross-wise. And on the pale bands are woven sometimes flowers in most lovely colours, rose-red and blue and green, peasant patterns--and sometimes fantastic animals, beasts, in dark wool again. So that these striped zebra bags, some wonderful gay with flowery colours on their stripes, some weird with fantastic, griffin-like animals, are a whole landscape in themselves.

The train has only first and third class. It costs about thirty francs for the two of us, third class to Mandas, which is some sixty miles. In we crowd with the joyful saddle-bags, into the wooden carriage with its many seats.

And, wonder of wonders, punctually to the second, off we go, out of Cagliari. En route again.