IV.

MANDAS.

The coach was fairly full of people, returning from market. On these railways the third class coaches are not divided into compartments. They are left open, so that one sees everybody, as down a room. The attractive saddle-bags, bercole, were disposed anywhere, and the bulk of the people settled down to a lively conversazione. It is much nicest, on the whole, to travel third class on the railway. There is space, there is air, and it is like being in a lively inn, everybody in good spirits.

At our end was plenty of room. Just across the gangway was an elderly couple, like two children, coming home very happily. He was fat, fat all over, with a white moustache and a little not-unamiable frown. She was a tall lean, brown woman, in a brown full-skirted dress and black apron, with huge pocket. She wore no head covering, and her iron grey hair was parted smoothly. They were rather pleased and excited being in the train. She took all her money out of her big pocket, and counted it and gave it to him: all the ten Lira notes, and the five Lira and the two and the one, peering at the dirty scraps of pink-backed one-lira notes to see if they were good. Then she gave him her half-pennies. And he stowed them away in the trouser pocket, standing up to push them down his fat leg. And then one saw, to one's amazement, that the whole of his

shirt-tail was left out behind, like a sort of apron worn backwards. Why--a mystery. He was one of those fat, good-natured, unheeding men with a little masterful frown, such as usually have tall, lean, hard-faced, obedient wives.

They were very happy. With amazement he watched us taking hot tea from the Thermos flask. I think he too had suspected it might be a bomb. He had blue eyes and standing-up white eyebrows.

"Beautiful hot--!" he said, seeing the tea steam. It is the inevitable exclamation. "Does it do you good?"

"Yes," said the q-b. "Much good." And they both nodded complacently. They were going home.

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The train was running over the malarial-looking sea-plain--past the down-at-heel palm trees, past the mosque-looking buildings. At a level crossing the woman crossing-keeper darted out vigorously with her red flag. And we rambled into the first village. It was built of sun-dried brick-adobe houses, thick adobe garden-walls, with tile ridges to keep off the rain. In the enclosures were dark orange trees. But the clay-coloured villages, clay-dry, looked foreign: the next thing to mere earth they seem, like fox-holes or coyote colonies.

Looking back, one sees Cagliari bluff on her rock, rather fine, with the thin edge of the sea's blade curving round. It is rather hard to believe in the real sea, on this sort of clay-pale plain.

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But soon we begin to climb to the hills. And soon the cultivation begins to be intermittent. Extraordinary how the heathy, moor-like hills come near the sea: extraordinary how scrubby and uninhabited the great spaces of Sardinia are. It is wild, with heath and arbutus scrub and a sort of myrtle, breast-high. Sometimes one sees a few head of cattle. And then again come the greyish arable-patches, where the corn is grown. It is like Cornwall, like the Land's End region. Here and there, in the distance, are peasants working on the lonely landscape. Sometimes it is one man alone in the distance, showing so vividly in his black-and-white costume, small and far-off like a solitary magpie, and curiously distinct. All the strange magic of Sardinia is in this sight. Among the low, moor-like hills, away in a hollow of the wide landscape one solitary figure, small but vivid black-and-white, working alone, as if eternally. There are patches and hollows of grey arable land, good for corn. Sardinia was once a great granary.

Usually, however, the peasants of the South have left off the costume. Usually it is the invisible soldiers' grey-green cloth, the Italian khaki. Wherever you go, wherever you be, you see this khaki, this grey-green war-clothing. How many millions of yards of the thick,

excellent, but hateful material the Italian government must have provided I don't know: but enough to cover Italy with a felt carpet, I should think. It is everywhere. It cases the tiny children in stiff and neutral frocks and coats, it covers their extinguished fathers, and sometimes it even encloses the women in its warmth. It is symbolic of the universal grey mist that has come over men, the extinguishing of all bright individuality, the blotting out of all wild singleness. Oh democracy! Oh khaki democracy!

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This is very different from Italian landscape. Italy is almost always dramatic, and perhaps invariably romantic. There is drama in the plains of Lombardy, and romance in the Venetian lagoons, and sheer scenic excitement in nearly all the hilly parts of the peninsula. Perhaps it is the natural floridity of lime-stone formations. But Italian landscape is really eighteenth-century landscape, to be represented in that romantic-classic manner which makes everything rather marvelous and very topical: aqueducts, and ruins upon sugar-loaf mountains, and craggy ravines and Wilhelm Meister water-falls: all up and down.

Sardinia is another thing. Much wider, much more ordinary, not up-and-down at all, but running away into the distance. Unremarkable ridges of moor-like hills running away, perhaps to a bunch of dramatic peaks on the southwest. This gives a sense of space, which is so lacking in Italy. Lovely space about one, and traveling distances--nothing

finished, nothing final. It is like liberty itself, after the peaky confinement of Sicily. Room--give me room--give me room for my spirit: and you can have all the toppling crags of romance.

So we ran on through the gold of the afternoon, across a wide, almost Celtic landscape of hills, our little train winding and puffing away very nimbly. Only the heath and scrub, breast-high, man-high, is too big and brigand-like for a Celtic land. The horns of black, wild-looking cattle show sometimes.

After a long pull, we come to a station after a stretch of loneliness. Each time, it looks as if there were nothing beyond--no more habitations. And each time we come to a station.

Most of the people have left the train. And as with men driving in a gig, who get down at every public-house, so the passengers usually alight for an airing at each station. Our old fat friend stands up and tucks his shirt-tail comfortably in his trousers, which trousers all the time make one hold one's breath, for they seem at each very moment to be just dropping right down: and he clambers out, followed by the long, brown stalk of a wife.

So the train sits comfortably for five or ten minutes, in the way the trains have. At last we hear whistles and horns, and our old fat friend running and clinging like a fat crab to the very end of the train as it sets off. At the same instant a loud shriek and a bunch of shouts from

outside. We all jump up. There, down the line, is the long brown stork of a wife. She had just walked back to a house some hundred yards off, for a few words, and has now seen the train moving.

Now behold her with her hands thrown to heaven, and hear the wild shriek "Madonna!" through all the hubbub. But she picks up her two skirt-knees, and with her thin legs in grey stockings starts with a mad rush after the train. In vain. The train inexorably pursues its course. Prancing, she reaches one end of the platform as we leave the other end. Then she realizes it is not going to stop for her. And then, oh horror, her long arms thrown out in wild supplication after the retreating train: then flung aloft to God: then brought down in absolute despair on her head. And this is the last sight we have of her, clutching her poor head in agony and doubling forward. She is left--she is abandoned.

The poor fat husband has been all the time on the little outside platform at the end of the carriage, holding out his hand to her and shouting frenzied scolding to her and frenzied yells for the train to stop. And the train has not stopped. And she is left--left on that God-forsaken station in the waning light.

So, his face all bright, his eyes round and bright as two stars, absolutely transfigured by dismay, chagrin, anger and distress, he comes and sits in his seat, ablaze, stiff, speechless. His face is almost beautiful in its blaze of conflicting emotions. For some time he is as if unconscious in the midst of his feelings. Then anger and resentment

crop out of his consternation. He turns with a flash to the long-nosed, insidious, Phoenician-looking guard. Why couldn't they stop the train for her! And immediately, as if someone had set fire to him, off flares the guard. Heh!--the train can't stop for every person's convenience! The train is a train--the time-table is a time-table. What did the old woman want to take her trips down the line for? Heh! She pays the penalty for her own inconsiderateness. Had she paid for the train--heh? And the fat man all the time firing off his unheeding and unheeded answers. One minute--only one minute--if he, the conductor had told the driver! if he, the conductor, had shouted! A poor woman! Not another train! What was she going to do! Her ticket? And no money. A poor woman--

There was a train back to Cagliari that night, said the conductor, at which the fat man nearly burst out of his clothing like a bursting seed-pod. He bounced on his seat. What good was that? What good was a train back to Cagliari, when their home was in Snelli! Making matters worse--

So they bounced and jerked and argued at one another, to their hearts' content. Then the conductor retired, smiling subtly, in a way they have. Our fat friend looked at us with hot, angry, ashamed, grieved eyes and said it was a shame. Yes, we chimed, it was a shame. Whereupon a self-important miss who said she came from some Collegio at Cagliari advanced and asked a number of impertinent questions in a tone of pert sympathy. After which our fat friend, left alone, covered his clouded

face with his hand, turned his back on the world, and gloomed.

It had all been so dramatic that in spite of ourselves we laughed, even while the q-b shed a few tears.

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Well, the journey lasted hours. We came to a station, and the conductor said we must get out: these coaches went no further. Only two coaches would proceed to Mandas. So we climbed out with our traps, and our fat friend with his saddle-bag, the picture of misery.

The one coach into which we clambered was rather crowded. The only other coach was most of it first-class. And the rest of the train was freight. We were two insignificant passenger wagons at the end of a long string of freight-vans and trucks.

There was an empty seat, so we sat on it: only to realize after about five minutes, that a thin old woman with two children--her grandchildren--was chuntering her head off because it was her seat--why she had left it she didn't say. And under my legs was her bundle of bread. She nearly went off her head. And over my head, on the little rack, was her bercola, her saddle-bag. Fat soldiers laughed at her good-naturedly, but she fluttered and flipped like a tart, featherless old hen. Since she had another seat and was quite comfortable, we smiled and let her chunter. So she clawed her bread

bundle from under my legs, and, clutching it and a fat child, sat tense.

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It was getting quite dark. The conductor came and said that there was no more paraffin. If what there was in the lamps gave out, we should have to sit in the dark. There was no more paraffin all along the line.--So he climbed on the seats, and after a long struggle, with various boys striking matches for him, he managed to obtain a light as big as a pea. We sat in this clair-obscur, and looked at the sombre-shadowed faces round us: the fat soldier with a gun, the handsome soldier with huge saddle-bags, the weird, dark little man who kept exchanging a baby with a solid woman who had a white cloth tied round her head, a tall peasant-woman in costume, who darted out at a dark station and returned triumphant with a piece of chocolate: a young and interested young man, who told us every station. And the man who spat: there is always one.

Gradually the crowd thinned. At a station we saw our fat friend go by, bitterly, like a betrayed soul, his bulging saddle-bag hanging before and after, but no comfort in it now--no comfort. The pea of light from the paraffin lamp grew smaller. We sat in incredible dimness, and the smell of sheeps-wool and peasant, with only our fat and stoic young man to tell us where we were. The other dusky faces began to sink into a dead, gloomy silence. Some took to sleep. And the little train ran on and on, through unknown Sardinian darkness. In despair we drained the last drop of tea and ate the last crusts of bread. We knew we must

arrive some time.

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It was not much after seven when we came to Mandas. Mandas is a junction where these little trains sit and have a long happy chat after their arduous scramble over the downs. It had taken us somewhere about five hours to do our fifty miles. No wonder then that when the junction at last heaves in sight everybody bursts out of the train like seeds from an exploding pod, and rushes somewhere for something. To the station restaurant, of course. Hence there is a little station restaurant that does a brisk trade, and where one can have a bed.

A quite pleasant woman behind the little bar: a brown woman with brown parted hair and brownish eyes and brownish, tanned complexion and tight brown velveteen bodice. She led us up a narrow winding stone stair, as up a fortress, leading on with her candle, and ushered us into the bedroom. It smelled horrid and sourish, as shutup bedrooms do. We threw open the window. There were big frosty stars snapping ferociously in heaven.

The room contained a huge bed, big enough for eight people, and quite clean. And the table on which stood the candle actually had a cloth. But imagine that cloth! I think it had been originally white: now, however, it was such a web of time-eaten holes and mournful black inkstains and poor dead wine stains that it was like some 2000 B.C. mummy-cloth. I

wonder if it could have been lifted from that table: or if it was mummified on to it! I for one made no attempt to try. But that table-cover impressed me, as showing degrees I had not imagined.--A table-cloth.

We went down the fortress-stair to the eating-room. Here was a long table with soup-plates upside down and a lamp burning an uncanny naked acetylene flame. We sat at the cold table, and the lamp immediately began to wane. The room--in fact the whole of Sardinia--was stone cold, stone, stone cold. Outside the earth was freezing. Inside there was no thought of any sort of warmth: dungeon stone floors, dungeon stone walls and a dead, corpse-like atmosphere, too heavy and icy to move.

The lamp went quite out, and the q-b gave a cry. The brown woman poked her head through a hole in the wall. Beyond her we saw the flames of the cooking, and two devil-figures stirring the pots. The brown woman came and shook the lamp--it was like a stodgy porcelain mantelpiece vase--shook it well and stirred up its innards, and started it going once more. Then she appeared with a bowl of smoking cabbage soup, in which were bits of macaroni: and would we have wine? I shuddered at the thought of death-cold red wine of the country, so asked what else there was. There was malvagia--malvoisie, the same old malmsey that did for the Duke of Clarence. So we had a pint of malvagia, and were comforted. At least we were being so, when the lamp went out again. The brown woman came and shook and smacked it, and started it off again. But as if to say "Shan't for you", it whipped out again.

Then came the host with a candle and a pin, a large, genial Sicilian with pendulous mustaches. And he thoroughly pricked the wretch with the pin, shook it, and turned little screws. So up flared the flame. We were a little nervous. He asked us where we came from, etc. And suddenly he asked us, with an excited gleam, were we Socialists. Aha, he was going to hail us as citizens and comrades. He thought we were a pair of Bolshevist agents: I could see it. And as such he was prepared to embrace us. But no, the q-b disclaimed the honor. I merely smiled and shook my head. It is a pity to rob people of their exciting illusions.

"Ah, there is too much socialism everywhere!" cried the q-b.

"Ma--perhaps, perhaps--" said the discreet Sicilian. She saw which way the land lay, and added:

"Si vuole un pocchetino di Socialismo: one wants a tiny bit of socialism in the world, a tiny bit. But not much. Not much. At present there is too much."

Our host, twinkling at this speech which treated of the sacred creed as if it were a pinch of salt in the broth, believing the q-b was throwing dust in his eyes, and thoroughly intrigued by us as a pair of deep ones, retired. No sooner had he gone than the lamp-flame stood up at its full length, and started to whistle. The q-b drew back. Not satisfied by this, another flame suddenly began to whip round the bottom of the

burner, like a lion lashing its tail. Unnerved, we made room: the q-b cried again: in came the host with a subtle smile and a pin and an air of benevolence, and tamed the brute.

What else was there to eat? There was a piece of fried pork for me, and boiled eggs for the q-b. As we were proceeding with these, in came the remainder of the night's entertainment: three station officials, two in scarlet peaked caps, one in a black-and-gold peaked cap. They sat down with a clamour, in their caps, as if there was a sort of invisible screen between us and them. They were young. The black cap had a lean and sardonic look: one of the red-caps was little and ruddy, very young, with a little mustache: we called him the maialino, the gay little black pig, he was so plump and food-nourished and frisky. The third was rather puffy and pale and had spectacles. They all seemed to present us the blank side of their cheek, and to intimate that no, they were not going to take their hats off, even if it were dinner-table and a strange signora. And they made rough quips with one another, still as if we were on the other side of the invisible screen.

Determined however, to remove this invisible screen, I said Good-evening, and it was very cold. They muttered Good-evening, and yes, it was fresh. An Italian never says it is cold: it is never more than fresco. But this hint that it was cold they took as a hint at their caps, and they became very silent, till the woman came in with the soup-bowl. Then they clamoured at her, particularly the maialino, what was there to eat. She told them--beef-steaks of pork. Whereat they

pulled faces. Or bits of boiled pork. They sighed, looked gloomy, cheered up, and said beef-steaks, then.

And they fell on their soup. And never, from among the steam, have I heard a more joyful trio of soup-swilkering. They sucked it in from their spoons with long, gusto-rich sucks. The maialino was the treble--he trilled his soup into his mouth with a swift, sucking vibration, interrupted by bits of cabbage, which made the lamp start to dither again. Black-cap was the baritone; good, rolling spoon-sucks. And the one in spectacles was the bass: he gave sudden deep gulps. All was led by the long trilling of the maialino. Then suddenly, to vary matters, he cocked up his spoon in one hand, chewed a huge mouthful of bread, and swallowed it down with a smack-smack-smack! of his tongue against his palate. As children we used to call this "clapping".

"Mother, she's clapping!" I would yell with anger, against my sister. The German word is schmatzen.

So the maialino clapped like a pair of cymbals, while baritone and bass rolled on. Then in chimed the swift bright treble.

At this rate however, the soup did not last long. Arrived the beef-steaks of pork. And now the trio was a trio of castanet smacks and cymbal claps. Triumphantly the maialino looked around. He out-smacked all.

The bread of the country is rather coarse and brown, with a hard, hard crust. A large rock of this is perched on every damp serviette. The maialino tore his rock asunder, and grumbled at the black-cap, who had got a weird sort of three-cornered loaf-roll of pure white bread--starch white. He was a swell with this white bread.

Suddenly black-cap turned to me. Where had we come from, where were we going, what for? But in laconic, sardonic tone.

"I like Sardinia," cried the q-b.

"Why?" he asked sarcastically. And she tried to find out.

"Yes, the Sardinians please me more than the Sicilians," said I.

"Why?" he asked sarcastically.

"They are more open--more honest." He seemed to turn his nose down.

"The padrone is a Sicilian," said the maialino, stuffing a huge block of bread into his mouth, and rolling his insouciant eyes of a gay, well-fed little black pig towards the background. We weren't making much headway.

"You've seen Cagliari?" the black-cap said to me, like a threat.

"Yes! oh Cagliari pleases me--Cagliari is beautiful!" cried the q-b, who travels with a vial of melted butter ready for her parsnips.

"Yes--Cagliari is so-so--Cagliari is very fair," said the black cap. "Cagliari è discreto." He was evidently proud of it.

"And is Mandas nice?" asked the q-b.

"In what way nice?" they asked, with immense sarcasm.

"Is there anything to see?"

"Hens," said the maialino briefly. They all bristled when one asked if Mandas was nice.

"What does one do here?" asked the q-b.

"Niente! At Mandas one does nothing. At Mandas one goes to bed when it's dark, like a chicken. At Mandas one walks down the road like a pig that is going nowhere. At Mandas a goat understands more than the inhabitants understand. At Mandas one needs socialism...."

They all cried out at once. Evidently Mandas was more than flesh and blood could bear for another minute to these three conspirators.

"Then you are very bored here?" say I.

"Yes."

And the quiet intensity of that naked yes spoke more than volumes.

"You would like to be in Cagliari?"

"Yes."

Silence, intense, sardonic silence had intervened. The three looked at one another and made a sour joke about Mandas. Then the black-cap turned to me.

"Can you understand Sardinian?" he said.

"Somewhat. More than Sicilian, anyhow."

"But Sardinian is more difficult than Sicilian. It is full of words utterly unknown to Italian--"

"Yes, but," say I, "it is spoken openly, in plain words, and Sicilian is spoken all stuck together, none of the words there at all."

He looks at me as if I were an imposter. Yet it is true. I find it quite easy to understand Sardinian. As a matter of fact, it is more a question of human approach than of sound. Sardinian seems open and manly and

downright. Sicilian is gluey and evasive, as if the Sicilian didn't want to speak straight to you. As a matter of fact, he doesn't. He is an over-cultured, sensitive, ancient soul, and he has so many sides to his mind that he hasn't got any definite one mind at all. He's got a dozen minds, and uneasily he's aware of it, and to commit himself to anyone of them is merely playing a trick on himself and his interlocutor. The Sardinian, on the other hand, still seems to have one downright mind. I bump up against a downright, smack-out belief in Socialism, for example. The Sicilian is much too old in our culture to swallow Socialism whole: much too ancient and rusé not to be sophisticated about any and every belief. He'll go off like a squib: and then he'll smoulder acridly and sceptically even against his own fire. One sympathizes with him in retrospect. But in daily life it is unbearable.

"Where do you find such white bread?" say I to the black cap, because he is proud of it.

"It comes from my home." And then he asks about the bread of Sicily. Is it any whiter than this--the Mandas rock. Yes, it is a little whiter.
At which they gloom again. For it is a very sore point, this bread.
Bread means a great deal to an Italian: it is verily his staff of life.
He practically lives on bread. And instead of going by taste, he now, like all the world, goes by eye. He has got it into his head that bread should be white, so that every time he fancies a darker shade in the loaf a shadow falls on his soul. Nor is he altogether wrong. For although, personally, I don't like white bread any more, yet I do like

my brown bread to be made of pure, unmixed flour. The peasants in Sicily, who have kept their own wheat and make their own natural brown bread, ah, it is amazing how fresh and sweet and clean their loaf seems, so perfumed as home-bread used all to be before the war. Whereas the bread of the commune, the regulation supply, is hard, and rather coarse and rough, so rough and harsh on the palate. One gets tired to death of it. I suspect myself the maize meal mixed in. But I don't know. And finally the bread varies immensely from town to town, from commune to commune. The so-called just and equal distribution is all my-eye. One place has abundance of good sweet bread, another scrapes along, always stinted, on an allowance of harsh coarse stuff. And the poor suffer bitterly, really, from the bread-stinting, because they depend so on this one food. They say the inequality and the injustice of distribution comes from the Camorra--la grande Camorra--which is no more nowadays than a profiteering combine, which the poor hate. But for myself, I don't know. I only know that one town--Venice, for example--seems to have an endless supply of pure bread, of sugar, of tobacco, of salt--while Florence is in one continual ferment of irritation over the stinting of these supplies--which are all government monopoly, doled out accordingly.

We said Good-night to our three railway friends, and went up to bed. We had only been in the room a minute or two, when the brown woman tapped: and if you please, the black-cap had sent us one of his little white loaves. We were really touched. Such delicate little generosities have almost disappeared from the world.

It was a queer little bread--three-cornered, and almost as hard as ships biscuit, made of starch flour. Not strictly bread at all.

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The night was cold, the blankets flat and heavy, but one slept quite well till dawn. At seven o'clock it was a clear, cold morning, the sun not yet up. Standing at the bedroom window looking out, I could hardly believe my eyes it was so like England, like Cornwall in the bleak parts, or Derbyshire uplands. There was a little paddock-garden at the back of the Station, rather tumble-down, with two sheep in it. There were several forlorn-looking out-buildings, very like Cornwall. And then the wide, forlorn country road stretched away between borders of grass and low, drystone walls, towards a grey stone farm with a tuft of trees, and a naked stone village in the distance. The sun came up yellow, the bleak country glimmered bluish and reluctant. The low, green hill-slopes were divided into fields, with low drystone walls and ditches. Here and there a stone barn rose alone, or with a few bare, windy trees attached. Two rough-coated winter horses pastured on the rough grass, a boy came along the naked, wide, grass-bordered high-road with a couple of milk cans, drifting in from nowhere: and it was all so like Cornwall, or a part of Ireland, that the old nostalgia for the Celtic regions began to spring up in me. Ah, those old, drystone walls dividing the fields--pale and granite-blenched! Ah, the dark, sombre grass, the naked sky! the forlorn horses in the wintry morning! Strange is a Celtic landscape, far

more moving, disturbing than the lovely glamor of Italy and Greece. Before the curtains of history lifted, one feels the world was like this--this Celtic bareness and sombreness and air. But perhaps it is not Celtic at all: Iberian. Nothing is more unsatisfactory than our conception of what is Celtic and what is not Celtic. I believe there never were any Celts, as a race.--As for the Iberians--!

Wonderful to go out on a frozen road, to see the grass in shadow bluish with hoar-frost, to see the grass in the yellow winter-sunrise beams melting and going cold-twinkly. Wonderful the bluish, cold air, and things standing up in cold distance. After two southern winters, with roses blooming all the time, this bleakness and this touch of frost in the ringing morning goes to my soul like an intoxication. I am so glad, on this lonely naked road, I don't know what to do with myself. I walk down in the shallow grassy ditches under the loose stone walls, I walk on the little ridge of grass, the little bank on which the wall is built, I cross the road across the frozen cow-droppings: and it is all so familiar to my feet, my very feet in contact, that I am wild as if I had made a discovery. And I realize that I hate lime-stone, to live on lime-stone or marble or any of those limey rocks. I hate them. They are dead rocks, they have no life--thrills for the feet. Even sandstone is much better. But granite! Granite is my favorite. It is so live under the feet, it has a deep sparkle of its own. I like its roundnesses--and I hate the jaggy dryness of lime-stone, that burns in the sun, and withers.

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After coming to a deep well in a grassy plot in a wide space of the road, I go back, across the sunny naked upland country, towards the pink station and its out-buildings. An engine is steaming its white clouds in the new light. Away to the left there is even a row of small houses, like a row of railway-mens' dwellings. Strange and familiar sight. And the station precincts are disorderly and rather dilapidated. I think of our Sicilian host.

The brown woman gives us coffee, and very strong, rich goats' milk, and bread. After which the q-b and I set off once more along the road to the village. She too is thrilled. She too breathes deep. She too feels space around her, and freedom to move the limbs: such as one does not feel in Italy and Sicily, where all is so classic and fixed.

The village itself is just a long, winding, darkish street, in shadow, of houses and shops and a smithy. It might almost be Cornwall: not quite. Something, I don't know what, suggests the stark burning glare of summer. And then, of course, there is none of the cosiness which climbing roses and lilac trees and cottage shops and haystacks would give to an English scene. This is harder, barer, starker, more dreary. An ancient man in the black-and-white costume comes out of a hovel of a cottage. The butcher carries a huge side of meat. The women peer at us--but more furtive and reticent than the howling stares of Italy.

So we go on, down the rough-cobbled street through the whole length of the village. And emerging on the other side, past the last cottage, we find ourselves again facing the open country, on the gentle down-slope of the rolling hill. The landscape continues the same: low, rolling upland hills, dim under the yellow sun of the January morning: stone fences, fields, grey-arable land: a man slowly, slowly ploughing with a pony and a dark-red cow: the road trailing empty across the distance: and then, the one violently unfamiliar note, the enclosed cemetery lying outside on the gentle hill-side, closed in all round, very compact, with high walls: and on the inside face of the enclosure wall the marble slabs, like shut drawers of the sepulchres, shining white, the wall being like a chest of drawers, or pigeon holes to hold the dead. Tufts of dark and plumy cypresses rise among the flat graves of the enclosure. In the south, cemeteries are walled off and isolated very tight. The dead, as it were, are kept fast in pound. There is no spreading of graves over the face of the country. They are penned in a tight fold, with cypresses to fatten on the bones. This is the one thoroughly strange note in the landscape. But all-pervading there is a strangeness, that strange feeling as if the depths were barren, which comes in the south and the east, sun-stricken. Sun-stricken, and the heart eaten out by the dryness.

"I like it! I like it!" cries the q-b.

"But could you live here?" She would like to say yes, but daren't.

We stray back. The q-b wants to buy one of those saddle-bag arrangements. I say what for? She says to keep things in. Ach! but peeping in the shops, we see one and go in and examine it. It is quite a sound one, properly made: but plain, quite plain. On the white cross-stripes there are no lovely colored flowers of rose and green and magenta: the three favorite Sardinian colors: nor are there any of the fantastic and griffin-like beasts. So it won't do. How much does it cost? Forty-five francs.

There is nothing to do in Mandas. So we will take the morning train and go to the terminus, to Sorgono. Thus, we shall cross the lower slopes of the great central knot of Sardinia, the mountain knot called Gennargentu. And Sorgono we feel will be lovely.

Back at the station we make tea on the spirit lamp, fill the thermos, pack the knapsack and the kitchenino, and come out into the sun of the platform. The q-b goes to thank the black-cap for the white bread, whilst I settle the bill and ask for food for the journey. The brown woman fishes out from a huge black pot in the background sundry hunks of coarse boiled pork, and gives me two of these, hot, with bread and salt. This is the luncheon. I pay the bill: which amounts to twenty-four francs, for everything. (One says francs or liras, irrespective, in Italy.) At that moment arrives the train from Cagliari, and men rush in, roaring for the soup--or rather, for the broth. "Ready, ready!" she cries, going to the black pot.