VII.

TO TERRANOVA AND THE STEAMER.

The morning was very clear and blue. We were up betimes. The old dame of the inn very friendly this morning. We were going already! Oh, but we hadn't stayed long in Nuoro. Didn't we like it?

Yes, we like it. We would come back in the summer when it was warmer.

Ah yes, she said, artists came in the summer. Yes, she agreed, Nuoro was a nice place--simpatico, molto simpatico. And really it is. And really she was an awfully nice, capable, human old woman: and I had thought her a beldame when I saw her ironing.

She gave us good coffee and milk and bread, and we went out into the town. There was the real Monday morning atmosphere of an old, same-as-ever provincial town: the vacant feeling of work resumed after Sunday, rather reluctantly; nobody buying anything, nobody quite at grips with anything. The doors of the old-fashioned shops stood open: in Nuoro they have hardly reached the stage of window-displays. One must go inside, into the dark caves, to see what the goods are. Near the doorways of the drapers' shops stood rolls of that fine scarlet cloth, for the women's costumes. In a large tailor's window four women sat sewing, tailoring, and looking out of the window with eyes still

Sunday-emancipate and mischievous. Detached men, some in the black and white, stood at the street corners, as if obstinately avoiding the current of work. Having had a day off, the salt taste of liberty still lingering on their lips, they were not going to be dragged so easily back into harness. I always sympathise with these rather sulky, forlorn males who insist on making another day of it. It shows a spark of spirit, still holding out against our over-harnessed world.

There is nothing to see in Nuoro: which, to tell the truth, is always a relief. Sights are an irritating bore. Thank heaven there isn't a bit of Perugino or anything Pisan in the place: that I know of. Happy is the town that has nothing to show. What a lot of stunts and affectations it saves! Life is then life, not museum-stuffing. One could saunter along the rather inert, narrow, Monday-morning street, and see the women having a bit of a gossip, and see an old crone with a basket of bread on her head, and see the unwilling ones hanging back from work, and the whole current of industry disinclined to flow. Life is life and things are things. I am sick of gaping things, even Peruginos. I have had my thrills from Carpaccio and Botticelli. But now I've had enough. But I can always look at an old, grey-bearded peasant in his earthy white drawers and his black waist-frill, wearing no coat or over-garment, but just crooking along beside his little ox-wagon. I am sick of "things," even Perugino.

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The sight of the woman with the basket of bread reminded us that we wanted some food. So we searched for bread. None, if you please. It was Monday morning, eaten out. There would be bread at the forno, the oven. Where was the oven? Up the road and down a passage. I thought we should smell it. But no. We wandered back. Our friends had told us to take tickets early, for perhaps the bus would be crowded. So we bought yesterday's pastry and little cakes, and slices of native sausage. And still no bread. I went and asked our old hostess.

"There is no fresh bread. It hasn't come in yet," she said.

"Never mind, give me stale."

So she went and rummaged in a drawer.

"Oh dear, Oh dear, the women have eaten it all! But perhaps over there--" she pointed down the street--"they can give you some."

They couldn't.

I paid the bill--about twenty-eight francs, I think--and went out to look for the bus. There it was. In a dark little hole they gave me the long ticket-strips, first-class to Terranova. They cost some seventy francs the two. The q-b was still vainly, aimlessly looking along the street for bread.

"Ready when you are," said our new driver rather snappily. He was a pale, cross-looking young man with brown eyes and fair "ginger" hair. So in we clambered, waved farewell to our old friends, whose bus was ready to roll away in the opposite direction. As we bumped past the "piazza" I saw Velveteens standing there, isolate, and still, apparently, scowling with unabated irritation.

I am sure he has money: why the first class, yesterday, otherwise. And I'm sure she married him because he is a townsman with property.

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Out we rolled, on our last Sardinian drive. The morning was of a bell-like beauty, blue and very lovely. Below on the right stretched the concave valley, tapestried with cultivation. Up into the morning light rose the high, humanless hills, with wild, treeless moor-slopes.

But there was no glass in the left window of the coupé, and the wind came howling in, cold enough. I stretched myself on the front seat, the q-b screwed herself into a corner, and we watched the land flash by. How well this new man drove! the long-nosed, freckled one with his gloomy brown eyes. How cleverly he changed gear, so that the automobile mewed and purred comfortably, like a live thing enjoying itself. And how dead he was to the rest of the world, wrapped in his gloom like a young bus-driving Hamlet. His answers to his mate were monosyllabic--or just no answers at all. He was one of those responsible, capable, morose

souls, who do their work with silent perfection and look as if they were driving along the brink of doom, say a word to them and they'll go over the edge. But gentle au fond, of course. Fiction used to be fond of them: a sort of ginger-haired, young, mechanic Mr. Rochester who has even lost the Jane illusion.

Perhaps it was not fair to watch him so closely from behind.

His mate was a bit of a bounder, with one of those rakish military caps whose soft tops cock sideways or backwards. He was in Italian khaki, riding-breeches and puttees. He smoked his cigarette bounderishly: but at the same time, with peculiar gentleness, he handed one to the ginger Hamlet. Hamlet accepted it, and his mate held him a light as the bus swung on. They were like man and wife. The mate was the alert and wide-eyed Jane Eyre whom the ginger Mr. Rochester was not going to spoil in a hurry.

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The landscape was different from yesterday's. As we dropped down the shallow, winding road from Nuoro, quite quickly the moors seemed to spread on either side, treeless, bushy, rocky, desert. How hot they must be in summer! One knows from Grazia Deledda's books.

A pony with a low trap was prancing unhappily in the road-side. We slowed down and slid harmlessly past. Then again, on we whizzed down the

looped road, which turned back on itself as sharply as a snake that has been wounded. Hamlet darted the bus at the curves; then softly padded round like an angel: then off again for the next parabola.

We came out into wide, rather desolate, moorland valley spaces, with low rocks away to the left, and steep slopes, rocky-bushy, on the right. Sometimes groups of black-and-white men were working in the forlorn distances. A woman in the madder costume led a panniered ass along the wastes. The sun shone magnificently, already it was hotter here. The landscape had quite changed. These slopes looked east and south to the sea, they were sun-wild and sea-wild.

The first stop was where a wild, rough lane came down the hill to our road. At the corner stood a lonely house--and in the road-side the most battered, life-weary old carriage I have ever seen. The jaunty mate sorted out the post--the boy with the tattered-battered brown carriage and brown pony signed the book as we all stood in the roadway. There was a little wait for a man who was fetching up another parcel. The post-bag and parcels from the tattered carriage were received and stowed and signed for. We walked up and down in the sun to get warm. The landscape was wild and open round about.

Pip! goes Mr. Rochester, peremptorily, at the horn. Amazing how obediently we scuffle in. Away goes the bus, rushing towards the sea. Already one felt that peculiar glare in the half-way heavens, that intensification of the light in the lower sky, which is caused by the

sea to sunward.

Away in front three girls in brown costume are walking along the side of the white high-road, going with panniers towards a village up a slight incline. They hear us, turn round, and instantly go off their heads, exactly like chickens in the road. They fly towards us, crossing the road, and swifter than any rabbits they scuttle, one after another, into a deep side-track, like a deep ditch at right angles to the road. There, as we roll past, they are all crouched, peering out at us fearfully, like creatures from their hole. The bus mate salutes them with a shout, and we roll on towards the village on the low summit.

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It is a small, stony, hen-scratched place of poor people. We roll on to a standstill. There is a group of poor people. The women wear the dark-brown costume, and again the bolero has changed shape. It is a rather fantastic low corset, curiously shapen; and originally, apparently, made of wonderful elaborate brocade. But look at it now.

There is an altercation because a man wants to get into the bus with two little black pigs, each of which is wrapped in a little sack, with its face and ears appearing like a flower from a wrapped bouquet. He is told that he must pay the fare for each pig as if it were a Christian. Cristo del mondo! A pig, a little pig, and paid for as if it were a Christian. He dangles the pig-bouquets, one from each hand, and the

little pigs open their black mouths and squeal with self-conscious appreciation of the excitement they are causing. Dio benedetto! it is a chorus. But the bus mate is inexorable. Every animal, even if it were a mouse, must be paid for and have a ticket as if it were a Christian. The pig-master recoils stupified with indignation, a pig-bouquet under each arm. "How much do you charge for the fleas you carry?" asks a sarcastic youth.

A woman sitting sewing a soldier's tunic into a little jacket for her urchin, and thus beating the sword into a ploughshare, stitches unconcernedly in the sun. Round-cheeked but rather slatternly damsels giggle. The pig-master, speechless with fury, slings the pig-bouquets, like two bottles one on either side the saddle of the ass whose halter is held by a grinning but also malevolent girl: malevolent against pig-prices, that is. The pigs, looking abroad from their new situation, squeal the eternal pig-protest against an insufferable humanity.

"Andiamo! Andiamo!" says ginger Mr. Rochester in his quiet but intense voice. The bus-mate scrambles up and we charge once more into the strong light to seaward.

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In we roll, into Orosei, a dilapidated, sun-smitten, god-forsaken little town not far from the sea. We descend in piazza. There is a great, false baroque façade to a church, up a wavering vast mass of steps: and at

the side a wonderful jumble of roundnesses with a jumble of round tiled roofs, peaked in the centre. It must have been some sort of convent. But it is eminently what they call a "painter's bit"--that pallid, big baroque face, at the top of the slow incline, and the very curious dark building at the side of it, with its several dark-tiled round roofs, like pointed hats, at varying altitudes. The whole space has a strange Spanish look, neglected, arid, yet with a bigness and a dilapidated dignity and a stoniness which carry one back to the Middle Ages, when life was violent and Orosei was no doubt a port and a considerable place. Probably it had bishops.

The sun came hot into the wide piazza; with its pallid heavy façade up on the stony incline on one side, and arches and a dark great courtyard and outer stair-ways of some unknown building away on the other, the road entering down-hill from the inland, and dropping out below to the sea-marshes, and with the impression that once some single power had had the place in grip, had given this centre an architectural unity and splendour, now lost and forgotten, Orosei was truly fascinating.

But the inhabitants were churlish. We went into a sort of bar-place, very primitive, and asked for bread.

"Bread alone?" said the churl.

"If you please."

"There isn't any," he answered.

"Oh--where can we get some then?"

"You can't get any."

"Really!"

And we couldn't. People stood about glum, not friendly.

There was a second great automobile, ready to set off for Tortolì, far to the south, on the east coast. Mandas is the railway junction both for Sorgono and Tortolì. The two buses stood near and communed. We prowled about the dead, almost extinct town--or call it village. Then Mr. Rochester began to pip his horn peremptorily, so we scuffled in.

The post was stowed away. A native in black broad-cloth came running and sweating, carrying an ox-blood suit-case, and said we must wait for his brother-in-law, who was a dozen yards away. Ginger Mr. Rochester sat on his driver's throne and glared in the direction whence the brother-in-law must come. His brow knitted irritably, his long, sharp nose did not promise much patience. He made the horn roar like a sea-cow. But no brother-in-law.

"I'm going to wait no longer," said he.

"Oh, a minute, a minute! That won't do us any harm," expostulated his mate. No answer from the long faced, long-nosed ginger Hamlet. He sat statuesque, but with black eyes looking daggers down the still void road.

"Eh va bene", he murmured through closed lips, and leaned forward grimly for the starting handle.

"Patience--patience--patience a moment--why--" cried the mate.

"Per l'amor' di Dio!" cried the black broad-cloth man, simply sizzling and dancing in anguish on the road, round the suit-case, which stood in the dust. "Don't go! God's love, don't start. He's got to catch the boat. He's got to be in Rome tomorrow. He won't be a second. He's here, he's here, he's here!"

This startled the fate-fixed, sharp-nosed driver. He released the handle and looked round, with dark and glowering eyes. No one in sight. The few glum natives stood round unmoved. Thunder came into the gloomy dark eyes of the Rochester. Absolutely nobody in sight. Click! went his face into a look of almost seraphic peace, as he pulled off the brakes. We were on an incline, and insidiously, oh most subtly the great bus started to lean forwards and steal into motion.

"Oh ma che!--what a will you've got!" cried the mate, clambering in to the side of the now seraphic-looking Rochester.

"Love of God--God!" yelled the broad-cloth, seeing the bus melt forwards and gather momentum. He put his hands up as if to arrest it, and yelled in a wild howl: "O Beppin'! Beppin--O!"

But in vain. Already we had left the little groups of onlookers behind. We were rolling downwards out of the piazza. Broad-cloth had seized the bag and was running beside us in agony. Out of the piazza we rolled, Rochester had not put on the engines and we were just simply rolling down the gentle incline by the will of God. Into the dark outlet-street we melted, towards the still invisible sea.

Suddenly a yell--"OO--ahh!!"

"È qua! È qua! È qua! È qua!" gasped broad-cloth four times. "He's here!" And then: "Beppin'--she's going, she's going!"

Beppin' appeared, a middle-aged man also in black broad-cloth, with a very scrubby chin and a bundle, running towards us on fat legs. He was perspiring, but his face was expressionless and innocent-looking. With a sardonic flicker of a grin, half of spite, half of relief, Rochester put on the brakes again, and we stopped in the street. A woman tottered up panting and holding her breast. Now for farewells.

"Andiamo!" said Rochester curtly, looking over his shoulder and making his fine nose curl with malice. And instantly he took off the brakes

again. The fat woman shoved Beppin' in, gasping farewells, the brother-in-law handed in the ox-blood-red suit-case, tottering behind, and the bus surged savagely out of Orosei.

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Almost in a moment we had left the town on its slope, and there below us was a river winding through marshy flats to the sea, to where small white surf broke on a flat, isolated beach, a quarter of a mile away. The river ran rapidly between stones and then between belts of high sere reeds, high as a man. These tall reeds advanced almost into the slow, horizontal sea, from which stood up a white glare of light, massive light over the low Mediterranean.

Quickly we came down to the river-level, and rolled over a bridge. Before us, between us and the sea rose another hill, almost like a wall with a flat top, running horizontal, perfectly flat, parallel with the sea-edge, a sort of narrow long plateau. For a moment we were in the wide scoop of the river-bed. Orosei stood on the bluff behind us.

Away to the right the flat river-marshes with the thick dead reeds met the flat and shining sea, river and sea were one water, the waves rippled tiny and soft-foot into the stream. To the left there was great loveliness. The bed of the river curved upwards and inland, and there was cultivation: but particularly, there were noble almond trees in full blossom. How beautiful they were, their pure, silvery pink gleaming so

nobly, like a transfiguration, tall and perfect in that strange cradled river-bed parallel with the sea. Almond trees were in flower beneath grey Orosei, almond trees came near the road, and we could see the hot eyes of the individual blossoms, almond trees stood on the upward slope before us. And they had flowered in such noble beauty there, in that trough where the sun fell magnificent and the sea-glare whitened all the air as with a sort of God-presence, they gleamed in their incandescent sky-rosiness. One could hardly see their iron trunks, in this weird valley.

But already we had crossed, and were charging up the great road that was cut straight, slant-wise along the side of the sea-hill, like a stairway outside the side of the house. So the bus turned southward to run up this stairway slant, to get to the top of the sea's long table-land. So, we emerged: and there was the Mediterranean rippling against the black rocks not so very far away below on our right. For, once on the long table-land the road turned due north, a long white dead-straight road running between strips of moorland, wild and bushy. The sea was in the near distance, blue, blue, and beating with light. It seemed more light than watery. And on the left was the wide trough of the valley, where almond trees like clouds in a wind seemed to poise sky-rosy upon the pale, sun-pale land, and beyond which Orosei clustered its lost grey houses on the bluff. Oh wonderful Orosei with your almonds and your reedy river, throbbing, throbbing with light and the sea's nearness, and all so lost, in a world long gone by, lingering as legends linger on. It is hard to believe that it is real. It seems so long since life left it

and memory transfigured it into pure glamour, lost away like a lost pearl on the east Sardinian coast. Yet there it is, with a few grumpy inhabitants who won't even give you a crust of bread. And probably there is malaria--almost sure. And it would be hell to have to live there for a month. Yet for a moment, that January morning, how wonderful, oh, the timeless glamour of those Middle Ages when men were lordly and violent and shadowed with death.

"Timor mortis conturbat me."

The road ran along by the sea, above the sea, swinging gently up and down, and running on to a sea-encroaching hilly promontory in the distance. There were no high lands. The valley was left behind, and moors surrounded us, wild, desolate, uninhabited and uninhabitable moors sweeping up gently on the left, and finishing where the land dropped low and clifflike to the sea on the right. No life was now in sight: even no ship upon the pale blue sea. The great globe of the sky was unblemished and royal in its blueness and its ringing cerulean light. Over the moors a great hawk hovered. Rocks cropped out. It was a savage, dark-bushed, sky-exposed land, forsaken to the sea and the sun.

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We were alone in the coupé. The bus-mate had made one or two sets at us, but he rather confused us. He was young--about twenty-two or three. He was quite good-looking, with his rakish military cap and his

well-knitted figure in military clothes. But he had dark eyes that seemed to ask too much, and his manner of approach was abrupt, persistent, and disconcerting. Already he had asked us where we were going, where we lived, whence we came, of what nationality we were, and was I a painter. Already he knew so much. Further we rather fought shy of him. We ate those pale Nuoro pastries--they were just flaky pastry, good, but with nothing inside but a breath of air. And we gnawed slices of very highly-flavoured Nuoro sausage. And we drank the tea. And we were very hungry, for it was past noon, and we had eaten as good as nothing. The sun was magnificent in heaven, we rushed at a great, purring speed along that moorland road just above the sea.

And then the bus-mate climbed in to share the coupé with us. He put his dark, beseeching and yet persistent eyes on us, sat plumb in front of us, his knees squared, and began to shout awkward questions in a strong curious voice. Of course it was very difficult to hear, for the great rushing bus made much noise. We had to try to yell in our Italian--and he was as awkward as we were.

However, although it said "Smoking Forbidden" he offered us both cigarettes, and insisted we should smoke with him. Easiest to submit. He tried to point us out features in the landscape: but there were none to point, except that, where the hill ran to sea out of the moor, and formed a cape, he said there was a house away under the cliffs where coastguards lived. Nothing else.

Then, however, he launched. He asked once more was I English and was the q-b German. We said it was so. And then he started the old story. Nations popped up and down again like Punch and Judy. Italy--l'Italia--she had no quarrel with La Germania--never had had--no--no, good friends the two nations. But once the war was started, Italy had to come in. For why. Germany would beat France, occupy her lands, march down and invade Italy. Best then join the war whilst the enemy was only invading somebody else's territory.

They are perfectly naïve about it. That's what I like. He went on to say that he was a soldier: he had served eight years in the Italian cavalry. Yes, he was a cavalryman, and had been all through the war. But he had not therefore any quarrel with Germany. No--war was war, and it was over. So let it be over.

But France--ma la Francia! Here he sat forward on his seat, with his face near ours, and his pleading-dog's eyes suddenly took a look of quite irrational blazing rage. France! There wasn't a man in Italy who wasn't dying to get at the throat of France. France! Let there be war, and every Italian would leap to arms, even the old. Even the old--anche i vecchi. Yes, there must be war--with France. It was coming: it was bound to come. Every Italian was waiting for it. Waiting to fly at the French throat. For why? Why? He had served two years on the French front, and he knew why. Ah, the French! For arrogance, for insolence, Dio!--they were not to be borne. The French--they thought themselves lords of the world--signori del mondo! Lords of the world, and masters

of the world. Yes. They thought themselves no less--and what are they? Monkeys! Monkeys! Not better than monkeys. But let there be war, and Italy would show them. Italy would give them signori del mondo! Italy was pining for war--all, all, pining for war. With no one, with no one but France. Ah, with no one--Italy loved everybody else--but France! France!

We let him shout it all out, till he was at the end of it. The passion and energy of him was amazing. He was like one possessed. I could only wonder. And wonder again. For it is curious what fearful passions these pleading, wistful souls fall into when they feel they have been insulted. It was evident he felt he had been insulted, and he went just beside himself. But dear chap, he shouldn't speak so loudly for all Italy--even the old. The bulk of Italian men are only too anxious to beat their bayonets into cigarette-holders, and smoke the cigarette of eternal and everlasting peace, to coincide at all with our friend. Yet there he was--raging at me in the bus as we dashed along the coast.

And then, after a space of silence, he became sad again, wistful, and looked at us once more with those pleading brown eyes, beseeching, beseeching--he knew not what: and I'm sure I didn't know. Perhaps what he really wants is to be back on a horse in a cavalry regiment: even at war.

But no, it comes out, what he thinks he wants.

When are we going to London? And are there many motor-cars in England?--many, many? In America too? Do they want men in America? I say no, they have unemployment out there: they are going to stop immigration in April: or at least cut it down. Why? he asks sharply. Because they have their own unemployment problem. And the q-b quotes how many millions of Europeans want to emigrate to the United States. His eye becomes gloomy. Are all nations of Europe going to be forbidden? he asks. Yes--and already the Italian Government will give no more passports for America--to emigrants. No passports? then you can't go? You can't go, say I.

By this time his hot-souled eagerness and his hot, beseeching eyes have touched the q-b. She asks him what he wants. And from his gloomy face it comes out in a rap. "Andare fuori dell'Italia." To go out of Italy. To go out--away--to go away--to go away. It has become a craving, a neurasthenia with them.

Where is his home? His home is at a village a few miles ahead--here on this coast. We are coming to it soon. There is his home. And a few miles inland from the village he also has a property: he also has land. But he doesn't want to work it. He doesn't want it. In fact he won't bother with it. He hates the land, he detests looking after vines. He can't even bring himself to try any more.

What does he want then?

He wants to leave Italy, to go abroad--as a chauffeur. Again the long beseeching look, as of a distraught, pleading animal. He would prefer to be the chauffeur of a gentleman. But he would drive a bus, he would do anything--in England.

Now he has launched it. Yes, I say, but in England also we have more men than jobs. Still he looks at me with his beseeching eyes--so desperate too--and so young--and so full of energy--and so longing to devote himself--to devote himself: or else to go off in an unreasonable paroxysm against the French. To my horror I feel he is believing in my goodness of heart. And as for motor-cars, it is all I can do to own a pair of boots, so how am I to set about employing a chauffeur?

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We have all gone quiet again. So at last he climbs back and takes his seat with the driver once more. The road is still straight, swinging on through the moorland strip by the sea. And he leans to the silent, nerve-tense Mr. Rochester, pleading again. And at length Mr. Rochester edges aside, and lets him take the driving wheel. And so now we are all in the hands of our friend the bus-mate. He drives--not very well. It is evident he is learning. The bus can't quite keep in the grooves of this wild bare road. And he shuts off when we slip down a hill--and there is a great muddle on the upslope when he tries to change gear. But Mr. Rochester sits squeezed and silently attentive in his corner. He puts out his hand and swings the levers. There is no fear that he will let

anything go wrong. I would trust him to drive me down the bottomless pit and up the other side. But still the beseeching mate holds the steering wheel. And on we rush, rather uncertainly and hesitatingly now. And thus we come to the bottom of a hill where the road gives a sudden curve. My heart rises an inch in my breast. I know he can't do it. And he can't, oh Lord--but the quiet hand of the freckled Rochester takes the wheel, we swerve on. And the bus-mate gives up, and the nerve-silent driver resumes control.

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But the bus-mate now feels at home with us. He clambers back into the coupé, and when it is too painfully noisy to talk, he simply sits and looks at us with brown, pleading eyes. Miles and miles and miles goes this coast road, and never a village. Once or twice a sort of lonely watch-house and soldiers lying about by the road. But never a halt. Everywhere moorland and desert, uninhabited.

And we are faint with fatigue and hunger and this relentless travelling. When, oh when shall we come to Siniscola, where we are due to eat our midday meal? Oh yes, says the mate. There is an inn at Siniscola where we can eat what we like. Siniscola--Siniscola! We feel we must get down, we must eat, it is past one o'clock and the glaring light and the rushing loneliness are still about us.

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But it is behind the hill in front. We see the hill? Yes. Behind it is Siniscola. And down there on the beach are the Bagni di Siniscola, where many forestieri, strangers, come in the summer. Therefore we set high hopes on Siniscola. From the town to the sea, two miles, the bathers ride on asses. Sweet place. And it is coming near--really near. There are stone-fenced fields--even stretches of moor fenced off. There are vegetables in a little field with a stone wall--there is a strange white track through the moor to a forsaken sea-coast. We are near.

Over the brow of the low hill--and there it is, a grey huddle of a village with two towers. There it is, we are there. Over the cobbles we bump, and pull up at the side of the street. This is Siniscola, and here we eat.

We drop out of the weary bus. The mate asks a man to show us the inn--the man says he won't, muttering. So a boy is deputed--and he consents. This is the welcome.

And I can't say much for Siniscola. It is just a narrow, crude, stony place, hot in the sun, cold in the shade. In a minute or two we were at the inn, where a fat, young man was just dismounting from his brown pony and fastening it to a ring beside the door.

The inn did not look promising--the usual cold room opening gloomily on the gloomy street. The usual long table, with this time a foully

blotched table-cloth. And two young peasant madams in charge, in the brown costume, rather sordid, and with folded white cloths on their heads. The younger was in attendance. She was a full-bosomed young hussy, and would be very queenly and cocky. She held her nose in the air, and seemed ready to jibe at any order. It takes one some time to get used to this cocky, assertive behaviour of the young damsels, the who'll-tread-on-the-tail-of-my-skirt bearing of the hussies. But it is partly a sort of crude defensiveness and shyness, partly it is barbaric méfiance or mistrust, and partly, without doubt, it is a tradition with Sardinian women that they must hold their own and be ready to hit first. This young sludge-queen was all hit. She flounced her posterior round the table, planking down the lumps of bread on the foul cloth with an air of take-it-as-a-condescension-that-I-wait-on-you, a subdued grin lurking somewhere on her face. It is not meant to be offensive: yet it is so. Truly, it is just uncouthness. But when one is tired and hungry....

We were not the only feeders. There was the man off the pony, and a sort of workman or porter or dazio official with him--and a smart young man: and later our Hamlet driver. Bit by bit the young damsel planked down bread, plates, spoons, glasses, bottles of black wine, whilst we sat at the dirty table in uncouth constraint and looked at the hideous portrait of His reigning Majesty of Italy. And at length came the inevitable soup. And with it the sucking chorus. The little maialino at Mandas had been a good one. But the smart young man in the country beat him. As water clutters and slavers down a choky gutter, so did his soup travel

upwards into his mouth with one long sucking stream of noise, intensified as the bits of cabbage, etc., found their way through the orifice.

They did all the talking--the young men. They addressed the sludge-queen curtly and disrespectfully, as if to say: "What's she up to?" Her airs were finely thrown away. Still she showed off. What else was there to eat? There was the meat that had been boiled for the soup. We knew what that meant. I had as lief eat the foot of an old worsted stocking. Nothing else, you sludge queen? No, what do you want anything else for?--Beefsteak--what's the good of asking for beefsteak or any other steak on a Monday. Go to the butcher's and see for yourself.

The Hamlet, the pony rider, and the porter had the faded and tired chunks of boiled meat. The smart young man ordered eggs in padella--two eggs fried with a little butter. We asked for the same. The smart young man got his first--and of course they were warm and liquid. So he fell upon them with a fork, and once he had got hold of one end of the eggs he just sucked them up in a prolonged and violent suck, like a long, thin, ropy drink being sucked upwards from the little pan. It was a genuine exhibition. Then he fell upon the bread with loud chews.

What else was there? A miserable little common orange. So much for the dinner. Was there cheese? No. But the sludge-queen--they are quite good-natured really--held a conversation in dialect with the young men, which I did not try to follow. Our pensive driver translated that there

was cheese, but it wasn't good, so they wouldn't offer it us. And the pony man interpolated that they didn't like to offer us anything that was not of the best. He said it in all sincerity--after such a meal. This roused my curiosity, so I asked for the cheese whether or not. And it wasn't so bad after all.

This meal cost fifteen francs, for the pair of us.

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We made our way back to the bus, through the uncouth men who stood about. To tell the truth, strangers are not popular nowadays--not anywhere. Everybody has a grudge against them at first sight. This grudge may or may not wear off on acquaintance.

The afternoon had become hot--hot as an English June. And we had various other passengers--for one a dark-eyed, long-nosed priest who showed his teeth when he talked. There was not much room in the coupé, so the goods were stowed upon the little rack.

With the strength of the sun, and the six or seven people in it, the coupé became stifling. The q-b opened her window. But the priest, one of the loudtalking sort, said that a draught was harmful, very harmful, so he put it up again. He was one of the gregarious sort, a loud talker, nervy really, very familiar with all the passengers. And everything did one harm--fa male, fa male. A draught fa male, fa molto male. Non è

vero? this to all the men from Siniscola. And they all said Yes--yes.

The bus-mate clambered into the coupé, to take the tickets of the second-class passengers in the rotondo, through the little wicket. There was great squeezing and shouting and reckoning change. And then we stopped at a halt, and he dashed down with the post and the priest got down for a drink with the other men. The Hamlet driver sat stiff in his seat. He pipped the horn. He pipped again, with decision. Men came clambering in. But it looked as if the offensive priest would be left behind. The bus started venomously, the priest came running, his gown flapping, wiping his lips.

He dropped into his seat with a cackling laugh, showing his long teeth. And he said that it was as well to take a drink, to fortify the stomach. To travel with the stomach uneasy did one harm: fa male, fa male--non è vero? Chorus of "yes."

The bus-mate resumed his taking the tickets through the little wicket, thrusting his rear amongst us. As he stood like this, down fell his sheepskin-lined military overcoat on the q-b's head. He was filled with grief. He folded it and placed it on the seat, as a sort of cushion for her, oh so gently! And how he would love to devote himself to a master and mistress.

He sat beside me, facing the q-b, and offered us an acid drop. We took the acid drop. He smiled with zealous yearning at the q-b, and resumed

his conversations. Then he offered us cigarettes--insisted on our taking cigarettes.

The priest with the long teeth looked sideways at the q-b, seeing her smoking. Then he fished out a long cigar, bit it, and spat. He was offered a cigarette.--But no, cigarettes were harmful: fanno male. The paper was bad for the health: oh, very bad. A pipe or a cigar. So he lit his long cigar and spat large spits on the floor, continually.

Beside me sat a big, bright-eyed, rather good-looking but foolish man. Hearing me speak to the q-b, he said in confidence to the priest: "Here are two Germans--eh? Look at them. The woman smoking. These are a couple of those that were interned here. Sardinia can do without them now."

Germans in Italy at the outbreak of the war were interned in Sardinia, and as far as one hears, they were left very free and happy, and treated very well, the Sardinians having been generous as all proud people are. But now our bright-eyed fool made a great titter through the bus: quite unaware that we understood. He said nothing offensive: but that sort of tittering exultation of common people who think they have you at a disadvantage annoyed me. However, I kept still to hear what they would say. But it was only trivialities about the Germans having nearly all gone now, their being free to travel, their coming back to Sardinia because they liked it better than Germany. Oh yes--they all wanted to come back. They all wanted to come back to Sardinia. Oh yes, they knew where they were well off. They knew their own advantage. Sardinia was

this, that, and the other of advantageousness, and the Sardi were decent people. It is just as well to put in a word on one's own behalf occasionally. As for La Germania--she was down, down: bassa. What did one pay for bread in Germany? Five francs a kilo, my boy.

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The bus stopped again, and they trooped out into the hot sun. The priest scuffled round the corner this time. Not to go round the corner was no doubt harmful. We waited. A frown came between the bus Hamlet's brows. He looked nerve-worn and tired. It was about three o'clock. We had to wait for a man from a village, with the post. And he did not appear.

"I am going! I won't wait," said the driver.

"Wait--wait a minute," said the mate, pouring oil. And he went round to look. But suddenly the bus started, with a vicious lurch. The mate came flying and hung on to the footboard. He had really almost been left. The driver glanced round sardonically to see if he were there. The bus flew on. The mate shook his head in deprecation.

"He's a bit nervoso, the driver," said the q-b. "A bit out of temper!"

"Ah, poor chap!" said the good-looking young mate, leaning forward and making such beseeching eyes of hot tolerance. "One has to be sorry for him. Persons like him, they suffer so much from themselves, how should

one be angry with them! Poverino. We must have sympathy."

Never was such a language of sympathy as the Italian. Poverino! Poverino! They are never happy unless they are sympathising pityingly with somebody. And I rather felt that I was thrown in with the poverini who had to be pitied for being nervosi. Which did not improve my temper.

However, the bus-mate suddenly sat on the opposite seat between the priest and the q-b. He turned over his official note book, and began to write on the back cover very carefully, in the flourishing Italian hand. Then he tore off what he had written, and with a very bright and zealous look he handed me the paper saying: "You will find me a post in England, when you go in the summer? You will find me a place in London as a chauffeur--!"

"If I can," said I. "But it is not easy."

He nodded his head at me with the most complete bright confidence, quite sure now that he had settled his case perfectly.

On the paper he had written his name and his address, and if anyone would like him as chauffeur they have only to say so. On the back of the scrap of paper the inevitable goodwill: Auguri infiniti e buon Viaggio. Infinite good wishes and a good journey.

I folded the paper and put it in my waistcoat pocket, feeling a trifle disconcerted by my new responsibility. He was such a dear fellow and such bright trustful eyes.

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This much achieved, there was a moment of silence. And the bus-mate turned to take a ticket of a fat, comfortable man who had got in at the last stop. There was a bit of flying conversation.

"Where are they from?" asked the good-looking stupid man next to me, inclining his head in our direction.

"Londra," said our friend, with stern satisfaction: and they have said so often to one another that London is the greatest city in the world, that now the very word Londra conveys it all. You should have seen the blank little-boy look come over the face of the big handsome fellow on hearing that we were citizens of the greatest city in the world.

"And they understand Italian?" he asked, rather nipped.

"Sicuro!" said our friend scornfully. "How shouldn't they?"

"Ah!" My large neighbour left his mouth open for a few moments. And then another sort of smile came on to his face. He began to peep at us sideways from his brown eyes, brightly, and was henceforth itching to

get into conversation with the citizens of the world's mistress-city. His look of semi-impudence was quite gone, replaced by a look of ingratiating admiration.

Now I ask you, is this to be borne? Here I sit, and he talks half-impudently and patronisingly about me. And here I sit, and he is glegging at me as if he saw signs of an aureole under my grey hat. All in ten minutes. And just because, instead of la Germania I turn out to be l'Inghilterra. I might as well be a place on a map, or a piece of goods with a trade-mark. So little perception of the actual me! so much going by labels! I now could have kicked him harder. I would have liked to say I was ten times German, to see the fool change his smirk again.

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The priest now chimed up, that he had been to America. He had been to America and hence he dreaded not the crossing from Terranuova di Sardegna to Cività Vecchia. For he had crossed the great Atlantic.

Apparently, however, the natives had all heard this song of the raven before, so he spat largely on the floor. Whereupon the new fat neighbour asked him was it true that the Catholic Church was now becoming the one Church in the United States? And the priest said there was no doubt about it.

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The hot afternoon wore on. The coast was rather more inhabited, but we saw practically no villages. The view was rather desolate. From time to time we stopped at a sordid-looking canteen house. From time to time we passed natives riding on their ponies, and sometimes there was an equestrian exhibition as the rough, strong little beasts reared and travelled rapidly backwards, away from the horrors of our great automobile. But the male riders sat heavy and unshakeable, with Sardinian male force. Everybody in the bus laughed, and we passed, looking back to see the pony still corkscrewing, but in vain, in the middle of the lonely, grass-bordered high-road.

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The bus-mate climbed in and out, coming in to sit near us. He was like a dove which has at last found an olive bough to nest in. And we were the olive bough in this world of waste waters. Alas, I felt a broken reed. But he sat so serenely near us, now, like a dog that has found a master.

The afternoon was declining, the bus pelted on at a great rate. Ahead we saw the big lump of the island of Tavolara, a magnificient mass of rock which fascinated me by its splendid, weighty form. It looks like a headland, for it apparently touches the land. There it rests at the sea's edge, in this lost afternoon world. Strange how this coast-country does not belong to our present-day world. As we rushed along we saw steamers, two steamers, steering south, and one sailing ship coming from

Italy. And instantly, the steamers seemed like our own familiar world. But still this coast-country was forsaken, forgotten, not included. It just is not included.

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How tired one gets of these long, long rides! It seemed we should never come up to Tavolara. But we did. We came right near to it, and saw the beach with the waves rippling undisturbed, saw the narrow waters between the rock-lump and the beach. For now the road was down at sea-level. And we were not very far from Terranova. Yet all seemed still forsaken, outside of the world's life.

The sun was going down, very red and strong, away inland. In the bus all were silent, subsiding into the pale travel-sleep. We charged along the flat road, down on a plain now. And dusk was gathering heavily over the land.

We saw the high-road curve flat upon the plain. It was the harbour head. We saw a magic, land-locked harbour, with masts and dark land encircling a glowing basin. We even saw a steamer lying at the end of a long, thin bank of land, in the shallow, shining, wide harbour, as if wrecked there. And this was our steamer. But no, it looked in the powerful glow of the sunset like some lonely steamer laid up in some land-locked bay away at Spitzbergen, towards the North Pole: a solemn, mysterious, blue-landed bay, lost, lost to mankind.

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Our bus-mate came and told us we were to sit in the bus till the post-work was done, then we should be driven to the hotel where we could eat, and then he would accompany us on the town omnibus to the boat. We need not be on board till eight o'clock: and now it was something after five. So we sat still while the bus rushed and the road curved and the view of the weird, land-locked harbour changed, though the bare masts of ships in a bunch still pricked the upper glow, and the steamer lay away out, as if wrecked on a sand-bank, and dark, mysterious land with bunchy hills circled round, dark blue and wintry in a golden after-light, while the great, shallow-seeming bay of water shone like a mirror.

In we charged, past a railway, along the flat darkening road into a flat God-lost town of dark houses, on the marshy bay-head. It felt more like a settlement than a town. But it was Terranova-Pausanias. And after bumping and rattling down a sombre uncouth, barren-seeming street, we came up with a jerk at a doorway--which was the post-office. Urchins, mudlarks, were screaming for the luggage. Everybody got out and set off towards the sea, the urchins carrying luggage. We sat still.

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Till I couldn't bear it. I did not want to stay in the automobile another moment, and I did not, I did not want to be accompanied by our

new-found friend to the steamer. So I burst out, and the q-b followed. She too was relieved to escape the new attachment, though she had a great tendre for him. But in the end one runs away from one's tendres much harder and more precipitately than from one's durs.

The mudlarking urchins fell upon us. Had we any more luggage--were we going to the steamer? I asked how one went to the steamer--did one walk? I thought perhaps it would be necessary to row out. You go on foot, or in a carriage, or in an aeroplane, said an impudent brat. How far? Ten minutes. Could one go on board at once? Yes, certainly.

So, in spite of the q-b's protests, I handed the sack to a wicked urchin, to be led. She wanted us to go alone--but I did not know the way, and am wary of stumbling into entanglements in these parts.

I told the bus-Hamlet, who was abstract with nerve fatigue, please to tell his comrade that I would not forget the commission: and I tapped my waistcoat pocket, where the paper lay over my heart. He briefly promised--and we escaped. We escaped any further friendship.

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I bade the mud-lark lead me to the telegraph office: which of course was quite remote from the post-office. Shouldering the sack, and clamouring for the kitchenino which the q-b stuck to, he marched forward. By his height he was ten years old: by his face with its evil mud-lark pallor

and good-looks, he was forty. He wore a cut-down soldier's tunic which came nearly to his knees, was barefoot, and sprightly with that alert mudlarking quickness which has its advantages.

So we went down a passage and climbed a stair and came to an office where one would expect to register births and deaths. But the urchin said it was the telegraph-office. No sign of life. Peering through the wicket I saw a fat individual seated writing in the distance. Feeble lights relieved the big, barren, official spaces--I wonder the fat official wasn't afraid to be up here alone.

He made no move. I banged the shutter and demanded a telegraph blank. His shoulders went up to his ears, and he plainly intimated his intention to let us wait. But I said loudly to the urchin: "Is that the telegraph official?" and the urchin said: "Si signore"--so the fat individual had to come.

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After which considerable delay, we set off again. The bus, thank heaven, had gone, the savage dark street was empty of friends. We turned away to the harbour front. It was dark now. I saw a railway near at hand--a bunch of dark masts--the steamer showing a few lights, far down at the tip of a long spit of land, remote in mid-harbour. And so off we went, the barefoot urchin twinkling a few yards ahead, on the road that followed the spit of land. The spit was wide enough to carry this road,

and the railway. On the right was a silent house apparently built on piles in the harbour. Away far down in front leaned our glimmering steamer, and a little train was shunting trucks among the low sheds beside it. Night had fallen, and the great stars flashed. Orion was in the air, and his dog-star after him. We followed on down the dark bar between the silent, lustrous water. The harbour was smooth as glass, and gleaming like a mirror. Hills came round encircling it entirely--dark land ridging up and lying away out, even to seaward. One was not sure which was exactly seaward. The dark encircling of the land seemed stealthy, the hills had a remoteness, guarding the waters in the silence. Perhaps the great mass away beyond was Tavolara again. It seemed like some lumpish berg guarding an arctic, locked-up bay where ships lay dead.

On and on we followed the urchin, till the town was left behind, until it also twinkled a few meagre lights out of its low, confused blackness at the bay-head, across the waters. We lad left the ship-masts and the settlement. The urchin padded on, only turning now and again and extending a thin, eager hand toward the kitchenino. Especially when some men were advancing down the railway he wanted it: the q-b's carrying it was a slur on his prowess. So the kitchenino was relinquished, and the lark strode on satisfied.

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Till at last we came to the low sheds that squatted between the steamer

and the railway-end. The lark led me into one, where a red-cap was writing. The cap let me wait some minutes before informing me that this was the goods office--the ticket office was further on. The lark flew at him and said "Then you've changed it, have you?" And he led me on to another shed, which was just going to shut up. Here they finally had the condescension to give me two tickets--a hundred and fifty francs the two. So we followed the lark who strode like Scipio Africanus up the gangway with the sack.

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It was quite a small ship. The steward put me in number one cabin--the q-b in number seven. Each cabin had four berths. Consequently man and woman must separate rigorously on this ship. Here was a blow for the q-b, who knows what Italian female fellow-passengers can be. However, there we were. All the cabins were down below, and all, for some mysterious reason, inside--no portholes outside. It was hot and close down below already. I pitched the sack on my berth, and there stood the lark on the red carpet at the door.

I gave him three francs. He looked at it as if it were my death-warrant. He peered at the paper in the light of the lamp. Then he extended his arm with a gesture of superb insolence, flinging me back my gold without a word.

"How!" said I. "Three francs are quite enough."

"Three francs--two kilometers--and three pieces of luggage! No signore. No! Five francs. Cinque franchi!" And averting his pallid, old mudlarking face, and flinging his hand out at me, he stood the image of indignant repudiation. And truly, he was no taller than my upper waistcoat pocket. The brat! The brat! He was such an actor, and so impudent, that I wavered between wonder and amusement and a great inclination to kick him up the steps. I decided not to waste my energy being angry.

"What a beastly little boy! What a horrid little boy! What a horrid little boy! Really--a little thief. A little swindler!" I mused aloud.

"Swindler!" he quavered after me. And he was beaten. "Swindler" doubled him up: that and the quiet mildness of my tone of invocation. Now he would have gone with his three francs. And now, in final contempt, I gave him the other two.

He disappeared like a streak of lightning up the gangway, terrified lest the steward should come and catch him at his tricks. For later on I saw the steward send other larks flying for demanding more than one-fifty. The brat.

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The question was now the cabin: for the q-b simply refused to entertain

the idea of sharing a cabin with three Italian women, who would all be sick simply for the fuss of it, though the sea was smooth as glass. We hunted up the steward. He said all the first-class cabins had four berths--the second had three, but much smaller. How that was possible I don't know. However, if no one came, he would give us a cabin to ourselves.

The ship was clean and civilised, though very poky. And there we were.

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We went on deck. Would we eat on board, asked another person. No, we wouldn't. We went out to a fourth little shed, which was a refreshment stall, and bought bread and sardines and chocolate and apples. Then we went on the upper deck to make our meal. In a sheltered place I lit the spirit lamp, and put on water to boil. The water we had taken from the cabin. Then we sat down alone in the darkness, on a seat which had its back against the deck cabins, now appropriated by the staff. A thin, cold wind was travelling. We wrapped the one plaid round us both and snugged together, waiting for the tea to boil. I could just see the point of the spirit-flame licking up, from where we sat.

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The stars were marvellous in the soundless sky, so big, that one could see them hanging orb-like and alone in their own space, yet all the

myriads. Particularly bright the evening-star. And he hung flashing in the lower night with a power that made me hold my breath. Grand and powerful he sent out his flashes, so sparkling that he seemed more intense than any sun or moon. And from the dark, uprising land he sent his way of light to us across the water, a marvellous star-road. So all above us the stars soared and pulsed, over that silent, night-dark, land-locked harbour.

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After a long time the water boiled, and we drank our hot tea and ate our sardines and bread and bits of remaining Nuoro sausage, sitting there alone in the intense starry darkness of that upper deck. I said alone: but no, two ghoulish ship's cats came howling at us for the bits. And even when everything was eaten, and the sardine-tin thrown in the sea, still they circled and prowled and howled.

We sat on, resting under the magnificent deep heavens, wrapped together in the old shepherd's shawl for which I have blessed so often a Scottish friend, half sheltered from the cold night wind, and recovering somewhat from the sixty miles bus-ride we had done that day.

As yet there was nobody on the ship--we were the very first, at least in the first class. Above, all was silent and deserted. Below, all was lit-up and deserted. But it was a little ship, with accommodation for some thirty first-class and forty second-class passengers.

In the low deck forward stood two rows of cattle--eighteen cattle. They stood tied up side by side, and quite motionless, as if stupefied. Only two had lain down. The rest stood motionless, with tails dropped and heads dropped, as if drugged or gone insensible. These cattle on the ship fascinated the q-b. She insisted on going down to them, and examining them minutely. But there they were--stiff almost as Noah's Ark cows. What she could not understand was that they neither cried nor struggled. Motionless--terribly motionless. In her idea cattle are wild and indomitable creatures. She will not realise the horrid strength of passivity and inertia which is almost the preponderant force in domesticated creatures, men and beast alike. There are fowls too in various coops--flappy and agitated these.

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At last, at about half past seven the train from the island arrived, and the people surged out in a mass. We stood hanging over the end of the upper deck, looking down. On they poured, in a thick mass, up the gangway, with all conceivable sorts of luggage: bundles, embroidered carry-alls, bags, saddle-bags--the q-b lamenting she had not bought one--a sudden surging mass of people and goods. There are soldiers too--but these are lined upon the bit of a quay, to wait.

Our interest is to see whether there will be any more first-class passengers. Coming up the wide board which serves as gangway each

individual hands a ticket to the man at the top, and is shooed away to his own region--usually second class. There are three sorts of tickets--green first-class, white second, and pink third. The second-class passengers go aft, the third class go forward, along the passage past our cabins, into the steerage. And so we watch and watch the excited people come on board and divide. Nearly all are second-class--and a great many are women. We have seen a few first-class men. But as yet no women. And every hat with ospreys gives the q-b a qualm.

For a long time we are safe. The women flood to the second-class. One who is third, begs and beseeches to go with her friends in the second. I am glad to say without success. And then, alas, an elderly man with a daughter, first-class. They are very respectable and pleasant looking. But the q-b wails: "I'm sure she will be sick."

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Towards the end come three convicts, chained together. They wear the brownish striped homespun, and do not look evil. They seem to be laughing together, not at all in distress. The two young soldiers who guard them, and who have guns, look nervous. So the convicts go forward to the steerage, past our cabins.

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At last the soldiers are straightened up, and turned on board. There almost at once they start making a tent: drawing a huge tarpaulin over a cross rope in the mid-deck below us, between the first and second class regions. The great tarpaulin is pulled down well on either side and fastened down, and it makes a big dark tent. The soldiers creep in and place their bundles.

And now it is the soldiers who fascinate the q-b. She hangs over the bar above, and peers in. The soldiers arrange themselves in two rows. They will sleep with their heads on their bundles on either side of the tent, the two rows of feet coming together inwards. But first they must eat, for it is eight o'clock and more.

Out come their suppers: a whole roast fowl, hunks of kid, legs of lamb, huge breads. The fowl is dismembered with a jack-knife in a twinkling, and shared. Everything among the soldiers is shared. There they sit in their pent-house with its open ends, crowded together and happy, chewing with all their might and clapping one another on the shoulder lovingly, and taking swigs at the wine bottles. We envy them their good food.

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At last all are on board--the omnibus has driven up from town and gone back. A last young lout dashes up in a carriage and scuffles aboard. The crew begins to run about. The quay-porters have trotted on board with the last bales and packages--all is stowed safely. The steamer hoots and

hoots. Two men and a girl kiss their friends all round and get off the ship. The night re-echoes the steamer's hoots. The sheds have gone all dark. Far off the town twinkles very sparsely. All is night-deserted.
And so the gangway is hauled up, and the rope hawsers quickly wound in. We are drifting away from the quay side. The few watchers wave their white handkerchiefs, standing diminutive and forlorn on the dark little quay, in the heart of the dark, deserted harbour. One woman cries and waves and weeps. A man makes exaggerated flag-wagging signals with his white handky, and feels important. We drift--and the engines begin to beat. We are moving in the land-locked harbour.

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Everybody watches. The commander and the crew shout orders. And so, very slowly, and without any fuss at all, like a man wheeling a barrow out of a yard gate, we throb very slowly out of the harbour, past one point, then past another, away from the encircling hills, away from the great lump of Tavolara which is to southward, away from the outreaching land to the north, and over the edge of the open sea.

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And now to try for a cabin to ourselves. I approach the steward. Yes, he says, he has it in mind. But there are eighty second-class passengers, in an accommodation space for forty. The transit-controller is now considering it. Most probably he will transfer some second-class women

to the vacant first-class cabins. If he does not do so, then the steward will accommodate us.

I know what this means--this equivocation. We decide not to bother any more. So we make a tour of the ship--to look at the soldiers, who have finished eating, sitting yarning to one another, while some are already stretched out in the shadow, for sleep. Then to look at the cattle, which stand rooted to the deck--which is now all messy. To look at the unhappy fowls in their coops. And a peep at the third-class--rather horrifying.

And so to bed. Already the other three berths in my cabin are occupied, the lights are switched off. As I enter I hear one young man tenderly enquiring of the berth below: "Dost thou feel ill?" "Er--not much--not much!" says the other faintly.

Yet the sea is like glass, so smooth.

I am quickly rolled in my lower berth, where I feel the trembling of the machine-impelled ship, and hear the creaking of the berth above me as its occupant rolls over: I listen to the sighs of the others, the wash of dark water. And so, uneasily, rather hot and very airless, uneasy with the machine-throbbing and the sighing of my companions, and with a cock that crows shrilly from one of the coops, imagining the ship's lights to be dawn, the night goes by. One sleeps--but a bad sleep. If only there were cold air, not this lower-berth, inside cabin

airlessness.