


# MEDITERRANEAN MOODS











Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2007 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation



MEDITERRANEAN MOODS









PEASANT GIRLS  
OF BONO, SARDINIA

FROM A WATER-COLOUR DRAWING BY  
G. BIASI



1027

# MEDITERRANEAN MOODS



FOOTNOTES OF TRAVEL IN THE ISLANDS OF  
MALLORCA, MENORCA, IBIZA AND SARDINIA

BY

J. E. CRAWFORD FLITCH, M.A.

WITH A FRONTISPIECE IN COLOUR REPRODUCED FROM  
A DRAWING BY G. BIASI, THIRTY-TWO ILLUSTRATIONS  
IN BLACK AND WHITE, AND MAPS

LONDON  
GRANT RICHARDS LTD  
1911

118378  
18 | 9 | 111



PLYMOUTH: WM. BRENDON AND SON, LTD., PRINTERS



TO  
MY MOTHER AND FATHER





# CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTORY . . . . .	11
MALLORCA	
CHAPTER	
I. PALMA DE MALLORCA . . . . .	19
II. THE COAST . . . . .	44
III. THE MOUNTAINS . . . . .	68
IV. THE PORT . . . . .	87
V. THE PLAIN . . . . .	108
MENORCA	
VI. THE LOST JEWEL . . . . .	139
VII. SEPULCHRES AND WHITEWASH . . . . .	151
IBIZA	
VIII. THE AMOURS OF SANTA EULALIA . . . . .	167
IX. THE IMPROVISERS . . . . .	182
SARDINIA	
X. CAGLIARI . . . . .	205
XI. THE GATE OF SILVER . . . . .	225
XII. THE FESTA OF SAN COSTANTINO . . . . .	249
XIII. THE BURIED CITY . . . . .	272
APPENDIX	
THE TRAVELLER IN THE ISLANDS OF THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN . . . . .	291





# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
Peasant Girls of Bono, Sardinia . . . . .	20
San Nicolas, Palma . . . . .	22
The Lonja, Palma . . . . .	28
The Cathedral, Palma . . . . .	36
The Cloisters of San Francisco, Palma . . . . .	40
A Corner of the Market, Palma . . . . .	54
Estallenchs . . . . .	58
Las Valentas Doñas de Can Tamany . . . . .	62
The Torrente, Soller . . . . .	66
Soller and Puig Mayor . . . . .	76
Pepe and Conchita at Lluch . . . . .	88
Puerto-Pollensa . . . . .	124
The Primera Comunion . . . . .	140
Puerto Mahon . . . . .	154
The Talayot of Binicodrell . . . . .	158
Ciudadela . . . . .	170
Returning from Mass, Santa Eulalia . . . . .	188
The Procession of Corpus Christi, San Antonio . . . . .	192
The City of Ibiza . . . . .	194
The Saints' Holiday . . . . .	212
Viale Regina, Cagliari . . . . .	226
Barbagian Horsemen . . . . .	228
Peasant Girls of Aritzo . . . . .	232
The Boundary of the Forest, Gennargentu . . . . .	236
The Confraternity of the Rosario . . . . .	240
Children of Desulo . . . . .	244
Going to Mass, Desulo . . . . .	246
Hearing Mass outside the Church of San Pietro . . . . .	250
On the way to the Festa . . . . .	258
Peasants of Barbagia . . . . .	270
Entrance to the Festa, Sedilo . . . . .	302
A Wedding Group, Aritzo . . . . .	304
A Spinster of Fonni . . . . .	





## INTRODUCTORY

EVERY traveller, consciously or unconsciously, is in search of certain exalted moments.

By the traveller I understand one who is half an exile, kinsman to the Wandering Jew. Not the mere holiday maker. His mood is too indiscriminating. The bare fact of his idleness and the dislocation of his customary habits are a perpetual and delightful miracle. He is the skilful alchemist who can transmute gold into pleasure at will. He carries with him an exhaustless fund of spirits, but no standard of criticism. Every town is a sort of exhibition provided with attractive side-shows. He finds friends stationed everywhere to receive him. He recognises them by the legends on their caps. They come to meet him at the train; they await him at the show-place; if he but glance at them they smile, bend their backs, smooth their hands. Every country is a museum which painstaking people have catalogued for him, recording the result of their research in red-bound volumes suited to his pocket. Providence plays the rôle of a kind of impresario, achieving telling effects in Alpine or African scenery, filling the stage with picturesque choruses.

## INTRODUCTORY

Pangloss was right—it is the best of all possible worlds.

But when he has sat long at the feast of foreign life; when he has dulled the edge of novelty, admired all that is to be admired, worn out his guide-books; when, in a word, he feels the premonitions of ennui; then, if he is honest with himself, the traveller will confess that travel is a wilderness punctuated by oases. These oases are the precious moments which he seeks. Unluckily there is no certain route which conducts to them. There is no map on which they are charted. They are not starred in Baedeker. The tourist agencies know nothing of them. The directions of friends are invariably misleading. Their oasis will be your mirage. No personal intuition will ever guide you to them. If you succeed in finding your way back to one which has once refreshed you, you will only experience the disillusion and bitter amazement with which you renew the acquaintance of a first love.

Yet the pursuit of these moments of exaltation and contentment is the supreme object of travel, and their discovery its reward. If you look back upon a tour you have made, you will find that your recollection of notable sights and historic places is indistinct, and that you have quite forgotten all the fateful statistics which guides and guide-books thrust upon you. But certain moments have made themselves immortal—a halt at



## THE FOOLISH TRAVELLER

midday by the waters of a lake, a dinner beneath the trees within earshot of music, the greeting of a peasant girl among the hills. The frequency of these red-letter moments is the index of the success of the journey. And happily they are un-failing. No diary is without the record of them. But their times are as unforeseen as the arrival of the thief in the night. They surprise you in the last places in the world where you would have expected them. One thing, however, you must avoid if you would not prevent their recurrence—never attempt to control or pre-arrange them.

The foolish traveller plans his travel as if it were a campaign. He arms himself prudently against its discomforts. He maps out the enemy's country beforehand, marking the points upon it which are to be his various objectives. From one to another of these he travels in a bee-line, firmly resisting temptations to loiter or digress. He compiles a time-table of his arrivals and departures. He knows the names of the hotels which will receive him. Nothing is left to hazard. It is difficult even for a piece of his luggage to detach itself from the rest and follow up an itinerary of its own. Him the capricious arbiter and disposer of these incalculable moments passes over. He has been at too great pains to safeguard his plans against derangement. Besides, he is surrounded by an atmosphere that is proof against penetration by alien moods. His attitude towards the

## INTRODUCTORY

country he travels in is that of an army in temporary occupation of hostile territory. The arid entrance hall of his hotel is the citadel from which he makes incursions into the surrounding country. All natives are belligerents, astute and conscienceless. If possible, he treats with them indirectly. His ambassadors are the myrmidons of the hotel, who serve his wants with the mixture of obsequiousness and apathy proper to their kind. His bearing towards strangers is dignified, but guarded. His one confidential associate is the camera to which he has entrusted the responsibilities of memory. His one emotion is the proud consciousness of his nationality.

The wise traveller comes not to conquer a country, but to be conquered by it. His only tactic should be that of masterly inactivity. He arranges nothing. He takes no thought for the train he shall catch on the morrow. If he misses it he is not disconcerted, for he never knows whether, if he had caught it, he might not have missed one of those rare moments of which he is always expectant. It is just as likely to visit him if he stays as if he goes. He is not at the mercy of any *contretemps*, or rather in every *contretemps* he has learned to discern the prefigurement of a mercy. If the engine had not run off the rails on the branch line to Lanusei in Sardinia, I should never have seen the skin-clad shepherd fold his sheep by lantern-light in a lap of the solemn hills.



## THE QUEST OF ECSTASY

If the *falucha* had not left Formentera before I got down to the harbour, should I ever have heard Juanito sing his gentle love-songs beneath the stars? Indeed, when I come to think of it, it was only when my plans were frustrated that my desires were fulfilled. It is chiefly when some mischance upsets the routine of travel that a country becomes most interesting and most intimate. Therefore the wise traveller knows the folly of compiling time-tables and itineraries. He is as unstable as water, changeful as the wind. He has no will of his own. He lets himself be directed by any chance word, by the caprice of a hall-porter or the error of a booking-clerk. For who can tell whether these be not the agents of fate?

It is easier to say where the ecstasy you seek will not overtake you than where it will. The presence of crowds of fellow-seekers is assuredly fatal to the search. "Nature is shy," observed the author of the *Sentimental Journey*, "and hates to act before spectators." So is art, and so is every other treasonous voice that half divulges the eternal secrets. They speak most confidentially to the solitary, sometimes to a company of two, at most of three. But to the trampling army that comes expressly to overhear what they have to say, sternly resolved to be melted with the right emotions, they are dumb. That is the use of the stars in the guide-books—they mark the places to avoid. A show-place is a deserted

## INTRODUCTORY

shrine from which the crowd has expelled the god. But do not therefore suppose that crowds are less propitious than solitude to these secret visitations. It was one evening when the citizens of Cagliari were thronging the Bastione di San Remy that I felt most nearly the beating of the invisible wings, as you shall hear later. But let it be a natural, spontaneous crowd, rooted in its own soil, not seeking but generating emotions, going about some decent human business,—carrying its saints through the streets, listening to blind beggars singing ballads, throwing roses at carnival time, or merely taking the sun in the piazza.

But the circumstances which determine these perfect moments are themselves indeterminable. All that is certain is that they are wholly fortuitous. And sometimes they are so minute that many overlook them. The high mood hangs upon a hint, an echo, a nothing. The rhythm of a woman's walk in the midst of a crowd, and it is upon you—a song heard in the night, music coming out of the open window of a lamp-lit room, a light burning over water, a boat running into harbour, the shape of an ancient vase, a glass of wine, a jewel in the ear. . . .

# MALLORCA





# I

## PALMA DE MALLORCA

EVERY place has its peculiar hour when it is most its proper self. The aspect of a town is as variable as that of a woman. It wears the most perverse disguises. Usually it most belies itself in its hours of parade—its forced gaiety of Carnival or its exaggerated grief of Holy Week. To find out its intimate spirit, it is necessary to surprise it in its unguarded moments, its waking or its sleep.

Incontestably your first view of Palma should be at dawn. If it were full of vivacity and energy like Barcelona, perhaps noon would be fitter ; if it breathed an air of languor and mystery like Granada, evening ; or if it lived a hectic life like Madrid, then the feverish hours after midnight. But Palma is neither vivacious, nor mysterious, nor feverish ; it is merely serene. And it is most serene when the stars are pale at dawn, and when the level morning light streams out upon it from the fretted lattices of the east. The gleaming flat-roofed houses, touching all the shades from white and pink to that warm, sunburnt brown which the Spaniards call *tostado*, stretch along

## PALMA DE MALLORCA

the sweeping rim of a bay almost as noble as that of Naples. At the western point, on a wooded hill above the gay villas of Porto-Pi, stands the august castle of Bellver, so surprisingly like the ideal medieval castle of romance that it has all the unreality of a piece of stage *décor*. At the eastern extremity the windmills of the Molinar and the outlying suburb of Las Enramadas fade away into the plain. In the midst, the bold, square mass of the cathedral rises up almost out of the water's edge like a cliff. In the distance, the misty mountains draw a wide rampart round the city, far enough away to give it ample space and breath, but lending a comfortable air of watchfulness and defence.

In some phenomenal inundation centuries ago a torrent burst down from the hills and hollowed out a channel which now forms the pleasant avenue of the *Rambla* and the *Borne*. It makes the one touch of modern Europe. Out of it the narrow Moorish streets climb like staircases to the higher levels of the town. Europe and Asia have disputed for the possession of Mallorca, but it was Europe that conquered, and it is Europe that has given the place its dominating character.

The architecture of the Mediterranean inherits from Rome its most significant feature, that quality of grandeur which proceeds from sheer magnitude. Rome impressed it upon these shores a first time when the Mediterranean was





SAN NICOLAS, PALMA



## PALMA'S PALACES

simply a lake in the midst of a single empire ; and when it had become almost obliterated in the conquering raids of the northern and eastern peoples, she impressed it a second time during that period of her resurrection which we call the Renaissance. Its scale is generous and imperial. It is a symbol of the solidarity which Rome gave to Europe. It expresses the dignity, the enduring vigour, and also something of the boastfulness of a domineering people, just as the hint of fantasy in the Arab architecture betrayed the instability of the Arab civilisation. But in the western Mediterranean the Moorish influence has been able to modify the Roman character. The Renaissance palaces, which rise steeply above the narrow streets of Palma, unlike those of Italy, obtrude no gay and ostentatious façade. They turn their backs upon the street. They are barrack-like and austere. Here and there the great expanse of wall is broken by a richly carved window, and high up, just beneath the eaves, where the eye almost forgets to look, the *mirador* opens out in a row of dwarf columns. These prison-like palaces conform to the Moorish jealous secrecy and distrust of an open social life. They are built as if they had only two functions to serve—to keep the light from getting in and the women from getting out. But the great doorway of the *patio* is always open, and as you pass you may catch a glimpse of the charm which



## PALMA DE MALLORCA

these forbidding buildings enclose—delicate arches and columns, the head of a well surmounted by flowing ironwork, the refreshing greenery of palms and plants.

Palma has no central heart and artery, as most cities have, where their life beats most vigorously. It is something of a maze. Its streets seldom lead to anything definite or take you to any notable show-place. They will take you, of course, to the cathedral; to the Lonja, which seems too delicately beautiful ever to have been an exchange, but then it was built in an age when commerce still had a visible romance; to the Casa de Cort, with its heavy Renaissance pomp; to the Moorish bath in the Calle d'en Serra, which is the only perfect relic of the Arab occupation; and to the nine-and-thirty churches lifting up their towers to the unclouded skies. But you find a sufficient recreation in letting the streets guide you whither they will, up flights of steps, past shops and palaces, through a sunny *plaza* or a market-place, beneath the high walls of an imprisoning garden, itself a prisoner, with the mystery that a hidden garden in a city always suggests—so secret, so voluptuous, so inaccessible. Sooner or later they will lead you back to the terrace on which the cathedral stands, where you can look out upon the smiling bay and listen all day to the languid waves making rhythmic music at your feet.

\*

\*

\*



THE LONGA, PALMA





## THE CATHEDRAL

Whoever writes the treatise on the art of the right disposition of buildings in the landscape will be wise in reserving the frontispiece for the Cathedral of Palma de Mallorca. A benevolent fate appears to have watched over almost all the world's great monuments and placed them in the one inevitable setting. In nine cases out of ten they would suffer some irremediable loss of proportion or dignity by transplantation. Remove St. Mark's from its Piazza to the Acropolis, and it is odds that it would look a trifle paltry and garish; one of Pharaoh's pyramids set down on Ludgate Hill would press like an intolerable nightmare on the breast of London; Giotto's campanile, if it stood upon the site of Palma's cathedral, would lose its fineness of proportion and assume something of the commonplace aspect of a lighthouse. The felicity of the site of the cathedral cannot, however, be put to the credit of the Christian architect who built it, for he merely set it on the site of the Moorish mosque. But in designing it he must have remembered that it would have to bear the eternal challenge of the sea. He gave it neither the tower nor spire that are demanded by the cities of the plains; its own natural terrace exalts it near enough to the skies. The campanile in which the bells are hung is on the northward side, hidden from the sea, and so low that it does not show above the central roof. He gave it magnitude;

## PALMA DE MALLORCA

but not the typical Mediterranean magnitude of a mighty unbroken expanse of wall. Its flank is serried by massive buttresses, repeating one another with the rhythm and monotonous variety of waves. And age and sun have given it a glory which it was not in his power to give—a golden glow, so soft and rich that only Nature's palette could compass it.

As a man grows older, and a little more tired of the chatter about art, I think he brings to the gustation of any object of beauty a less intellectual and more purely physical discernment. He no longer comes in order to purify his taste or to correct his judgment of this or the other school. He has lost the keenness of youth for great argument about art (perhaps because he has found out the true value of the lying Q.E.D.s), and has become that thing that youth abhors—the unashamed hedonist. He acquires the holiday-making, even the tripping, frame of mind; he is frankly out for sensuous enjoyment. As he looks with his eyes, his spirit is put to sleep; the mind forgets whatever learning it has pillaged from æsthetic lumber-rooms; the eye itself is passive, and appears to perceive without reporting any articulate messages to the brain; only the body is awake and alert. He uncovers his five naked senses, and only asks of art that she shall gratify them or as many of them as she can touch. And art responds so generously to

## A SIXTH SENSE

this ingenuous appeal that she gives herself to him as she never gives herself to the cold analyst who uses her only for purposes of dissection. She communicates an almost bodily exhilaration, heightening the sense of vitality, and yet seemingly so independent of sight and touch and hearing as almost to suggest the existence of a rudimentary sixth sense—a sense which would be an invaluable adjunct to the mental apparatus of the critic, refreshing his judgment and purging it of pedantry and the prejudice of schools. You may be shocked at the grossness of this method of assay, but I am inclined to believe that it is the most sure and spontaneous of intuitions. On suddenly encountering the Velasquez pictures in the Prado at Madrid, it is possible to have but one single immediate sensation—merely that of breathing purer air. The same sensation will come upon you when you enter the cathedral of Palma. It is almost like an alteration in the specific gravity of the body, a sense of unaccustomed lightness and buoyancy, a feeling as of an ampler respiration of the lungs.

Although the impression of beauty is more immediate and convincing in the cathedral of Palma than in any other cathedral that I know, its secret is more elusive. The eye commences its voyage of exploration to discover the source of the delight it feels; but it is like a game of blind-man's buff—aerial voices sound in every



## PALMA DE MALLORCA

quarter, but, quickly as you dart your glance in their direction, you encounter only empty space. The pillars of the nave rise with a delicate dignity, but without the grace of clustering shafts ; the capitals are simple and undecorated ; the vaulting has no other ornament than that of fine masonry. The eye passes upwards from the pools of blue and orange on the stone flags, only to be repelled by the garishness of the glass. Above the eastern arch of the nave blooms an immense rose window, which in colour and design faithfully reproduces that obsolete toy, the kaleidoscope. It keeps you anxiously expectant of the click which announces the hasty shuffling of the fragments of glass into the next surprising geometrical composition. There is no intricacy of transepts which, with their interrupted glimpses of alleys and arcades, give a charm to the design of the simplest Gothic church. The eye returns from its quest baffled, having found no definite place of beauty to rest upon.

I have found the great beauty of the cathedral in that most difficult triumph of the architect's art, the exquisite manipulation of space. The secret of its construction is that the architect has thrown a canopy of stone over the greatest possible area with the least possible expenditure of material. Too often in a Gothic cathedral the tyranny of material robs the eye of its enjoyment ; there is a kind of exhibition of brute strength,

## THE JOY OF SPACE

which is imposing but fatiguing, as if a giant were straining to support a superhuman burden. But here the effort is concealed. The pillars leap upwards with a lightness, almost with a gaiety, which communicates that delight which we feel in a difficult thing easily accomplished. The difficult art which the architect of Palma's cathedral has mastered is to know how to carve out of the void a certain definite body of space which you can perceive and enjoy ; for it is only by circumscribing space that you can appreciate it. In the rough quadrangle outside the cathedral, formed by a miscellaneous grouping of buildings, although the sky is illimitably far above you, there is no sense of largeness ; but go inside, and although the roof, not two hundred feet above your head, shuts out the infinity of the sky, you are conscious of moving more freely in a more ample atmosphere. Most buildings imprison space, so that a window or even a picture on the wall is needful to provide a way of escape. In the perfect building—and herein is the perfection of Palma's cathedral—space is not confined, but rather created : it is no longer a negative, but a positive thing ; it floods round you like light, not oppressing, but refreshing the senses. The extraordinary modesty of this cathedral, which never obtrudes itself—which, in fact, appears to recede as the eye interrogates it—proceeds from the fact that its beauty resides not in obvious ornament, but

## PALMA DE MALLORCA

in its arrangement of plain surfaces and bounding lines which serve merely as the mould and receptacle of space.

The cathedral is the most reasonable of Christian temples. Its body may be Gothic, but its spirit is full of the old Latin sanity. Unless a man has an overdose of the ascetic in his composition, he must be aware of something tortured, painful, unserene in too many of the cathedrals of the North, a furtiveness in their intricacy, an oppressiveness in their sheer mass of masonry. Palma's cathedral has not the mundanity of the Renaissance, but it produces that sense of the enfranchisement of the spirit which is special to classical art. Indeed, it would appear that the Church had found this temple too reasonable for the proper exposition of her mysteries. Is it another example of her unfailing wisdom that she has always perceived the essentially pagan nature of southern sunlight, so different from that of the North, which descends upon the earth like a benediction of God? She appears to have realised that her candles could not burn in the unscrupulous blaze of a Mediterranean noon. What the architect was doing to plan as much window-space as would have served to illuminate St. Paul's on a winter's afternoon, I cannot conjecture. But the Church has rectified his error. She has blocked up the windows and expelled the intruding light, so that on first entering the cathe-





THE CATHEDRAL, PALMA



## THE PAGAN SUN

dral you will suppose that this is not the most reasonable, but the most mysterious church in Christendom. But gradually you will perceive that the mystery is not inherent in the structure ; it is something added, and it has an uncertain tenure. All round the building the sun lays a vigilant siege. It darts its shafts through every chink and loophole of the fortress, and if a door should open it bursts in like a heresy. It is a disenchantment. The eye suffers a sudden pain ; the mind loses its attentive attitude ; the tapers pale, and the spell is broken.

But the conquest of the pagan sun is not enduring. Every night it is defeated, and when the dark comes up out of the sea the Church regains her powerful dominion and reasserts the permanence of the faith. And when you stand beneath the stars outside the cathedral, and see the mighty rhythm of its arches above you and hear the answering rhythm of the waves below, you know that it belongs to the category of eternal things and is of the same quality as the stars and the sea.

\* \* \*

Palma is not resourceful in diversions.

If a man travels a thousand miles from Charing Cross to a town that still in its dreams beside the Mediterranean remembers the ancient domination of the Moors, has he not the right to look

## PALMA DE MALLORCA

for a diverting thrill of the bizarre and the barbaric in its popular amusements? Certainly I thought so when I paid my twenty-five centimos for a stall in the Teatro Balear. I chose the Balear because the name suggested all that was most local, insular, essentially Balearic, and in spite of the ambiguous announcement which stated that it was *el unico teatro que se permite vaciar en tres minutos*—the only theatre which permitted itself to be emptied in three minutes! I had expected to find something like one of those little delightful stifling cafés in Barcelona, where the stage is on the most intimate terms with the stalls, and the *copletistas* address their couplets to the members of the audience individually. I found the Teatro Balear a vast, pretentious hall where a personality flung over the foot-lights must infallibly have been converted into an insult. But the audience was so sparse that, had it wished to do so, it could have emptied itself in much less than the advertised time. I sat, however, with ears expectant of the exciting staccato of the castanets. Suddenly the lights failed; from the back of the hall came a familiar mosquito-like drone, and upon the white curtain in front of the proscenium appeared the flickering pictures of the cinematograph—the same as you may see them anywhere else in the civilised world, except that here the forked lightning which appears undesignedly, but inevitably, to



## THE CINE

form a tragic accompaniment to these little dramas played somewhat more luridly and insistently than elsewhere.

In Spain they call it the Cine. It is surprising that the genius of the English language, which, as a rule, is prompt to dock the alien immigrants of speech of their redundant syllables, has as yet made nothing of that awkward mouthful, Cinematograph. Cine is apt, concise, sufficient, and has that quality of all right words of being in some degree expressive of the thing it stands for. Perhaps its curtailment here is due to the fact that it is more constantly before one's eyes and on one's tongue. When you open the morning paper you will be sure to find some brief but respectful notice of last night's performance. You will read that the function was *animado*, that the pictures were *aplaudisimos*, or that there was *un grandiose début de nuevas películas*—a grandiose début of new films.

At first I felt that I had a grievance against the Mallorquin. Tradition had led me to associate the dance and not the Cine with his ardent southern temperament. But undoubtedly there must be times when a people finds its traditions a little burdensome—especially when these traditions have been imposed upon it by sentimental Teutons and Anglo-Saxons in quest of the romance which their own countries no longer afford them. And just at present the Latin race

## PALMA DE MALLORCA

is very anxious itself to be unromantic and Anglo-Saxon.

Somewhat reconciled by these reflections, I painfully adjusted my vision to the required focus and my mind to a more tolerant disposition. As the noiseless tragedies jerkily unrolled themselves a doubt insinuated itself whether, after all, my contempt of the Cine was well founded. Behind the servile mechanism I felt that there lurked the rudiments of an art. Already it had acquired its conventions. When the drama presented itself in a green light, it was a warning that tragedy was imminent. Deprived of speech, the characters were compelled to invent an elaborate symbolism of gesture. Thus, when the heroine held her breast in her hands and shook herself like a retriever emerging from the water, one understood that she was under the sway of uncontrollable passion. When the hero, before committing the burglary, clenched his fist and looked up to heaven, it was plain that he was impelled to his crime by the injustice of a ruthless capitalistic society. The hastening figures, always on the point of breaking into a trot, reflected the purposeless hurry of our modern age. The morality of the Cine is as unimpeachable as that of the modern democracy. Its crimes are always of the venial sort that are only committed against the rich. Its justice is exclusively poetic. Its humour has the obvious, boisterous

## THE ART OF DEMOCRACY

character which has always been dear to the populace ever since Shakespeare tickled with his buffooneries the groundlings of the Globe. I reflected that hitherto the attitude of democracy to the arts had been a little uncertain. It has viewed them with suspicion as the product of a civilisation in which the proletariat did not have the directing hand. I suspect that beneath an air of robust contempt it has been galled by a secret soreness. It has been stung by the reproach of its own sterility. But in the Teatro Balear I realised that this reproach was no longer justified, and that the Cine, the ultimate art of our times, was the sole and proper art of Democracy.

There is a sense in which all art is democratic—at all events, in its beginnings. In the democracies of the ancient world beauty came to birth almost unconsciously, in the mere act of living. But these democracies were warring and jarring atoms. Their arts were local, and drew from the soil a native flavour as precise and distinguishable as that of their wine. The modern democracy, whose birthday is variously dated 1789 or 1848, is essentially international and cosmopolitan. It works to impose uniformity upon the world. It makes war upon the local differences in which the earlier arts were nurtured. It is abolishing dialects, and it would, if it could, abolish languages also, substituting a colourless mercantile idiom, such as Esperanto. It suppresses every



## PALMA DE MALLORCA

costume that is special and appropriate, so that the dress of the modern ploughman and even of the modern scarecrow differs only in condition, and not in spirit, from that which is worn in Bond Street. Hence modern democracy has had difficulty in creating an art ; because a song or a dance or a melody, if they are to warm the blood, must have something local as well as universal in them. In the Cine, however, it has found a medium of expression. The Cine confines itself to those things which are cosmopolitan. It expresses the lowest common denominator of our modern civilisation. It has no nationality . . .

I was pondering these things during an interval between the dramas, when the young man who occupied the stall next to mine began to be communicative. A common enthusiasm for the great democratic art relieved us from the necessity of a formal introduction. He told me that he was a haberdasher's assistant, and opened his soul to me as to a brother. For were we not all brothers ! he exclaimed. For his part he did not believe in nationality which separates men—not in France, nor in Germany, nor in Italy, nor in Great Britain ; and, he hastened to add, lest he should seem to have presented the doctrine of internationalism in too partial a light, not even in Spain. Neither did he believe in a deity, nor in a life in the world to come. *Una vida, una muerte*—one life, one death—was his sufficient



## AN AFICIONADO

creed. And he might have added, one Cine. For this young man with such an economy of belief, at any rate, believed in the Cine. He did not wish to see the dance, the *jota* or the *fandango*, because it was a local thing and tended to perpetuate the distinctions of nationality. But, consciously or sub-consciously, he was aware that the Cine was not a divider of peoples, but a reconciler. Its films carried the same sentiments of humanity, the same undenominational morality, the same venerable humour, to the costers of London, the apaches of Paris, the moujikis of Moscow, and the rationalistic young haberdashers of Palma de Mallorca. It represented the triumph of the brotherhood of man over the separatist tendencies of the nations. It stood for the solidarity of modern Europe. Therefore this young man was an *aficionado* of the Cine; therefore he was one of those who gave animation to the function, whose nightly applause was recorded in the morning papers; and therefore he parted from me with the cordial wish that he might find me in my place at the *grandiose début de nuevas películas* on the morrow.

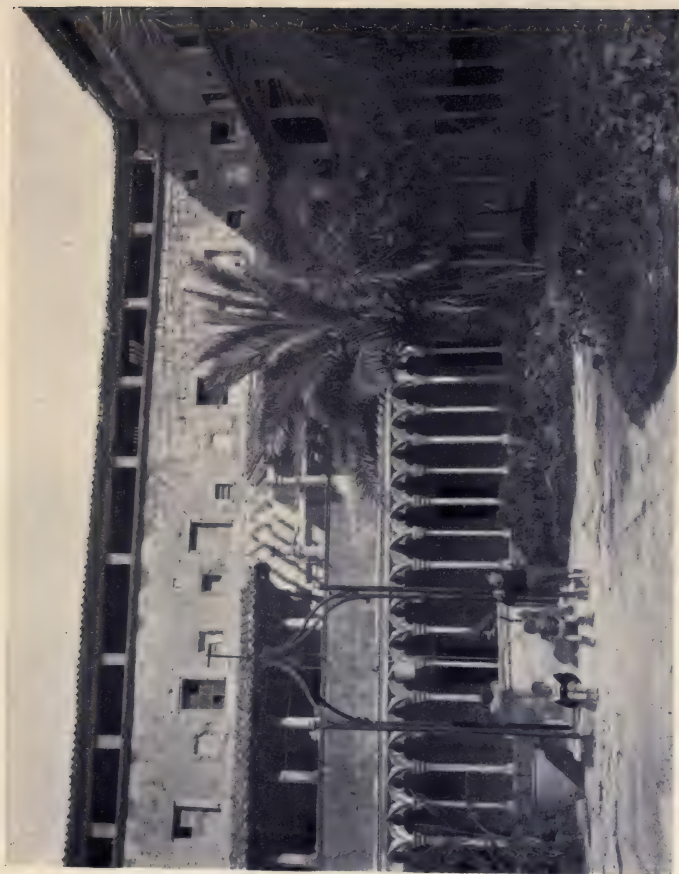
\* \* \*

During Holy Week Palma grieves—or feigns to grieve; for, though its mourning is profound, it is not profound enough to hide the serenity of its smile. The streets are silent. The Ayuntamiento

## PALMA DE MALLORCA

has decided by sixteen votes to nine (for even in Catholic Mallorca there is a secularist remnant) that all wheeled traffic be prohibited from the evening of Thursday to the morning of Saturday, except such as is necessary for the conveyance of doctors and scavengers. The only sound in the city is that of the bleating of lambs. Almost every courtyard resounds with their plaintive, interrogatory cries. But between the hours of twelve and three on Good Friday, men with blood-stained aprons pass from house to house; little by little the bleating ceases, and at last utter silence reigns over the city. The women pass from one church to another, visiting the *monumentos*, dressed from head to foot in black and smiling seductively beneath their rich lace mantillas. In spite of its ostentation of woe, their mourning dress has a gala aspect. In these white, sun-soaked cities of the Mediterranean black is seen to be what Velasquez knew it to be—the most voluptuous of all the colours. The women know it too, and give it its full value by thickly powdering their faces—even although the deep shade of the *patios* where their days are spent has already paled them to the tint of ivory.

The great day of Holy Week is not Good Friday, but Thursday, *Jueves Santo*, the day on which the institution of the Eucharist is commemorated. On that day the great procession of the *Sangre* passes through the streets. It sets out from the



THE CLOISTERS OF SAN FRANCISCO, PALMA





## THE PROCESSION OF THE *SANGRE*

Iglesia del Hospital in the afternoon, and when night has fallen it is still winding its way with a glow of candles through the steep and tortuous *calles*. It is preceded by the *guardia civiles* on horseback, in the pride of gala uniform, cocked hat, gold tassels, and spotless white breeches. They are followed by a military band playing a dead march, and soldiers, with arms reversed, stepping slowly to the weeping music. Then come the penitents of the various *cofradías*—medieval figures, with girdled gowns and tall, conical headgear which comes down over their faces like an Arab woman's veil. Through the slits in the mask gleam roving impenitent eyes, which appraise the women in the balconies with a calculating, impartial gaze. In their hands they carry lighted candles and the various emblems of the Passion, a miniature ladder, a scourge, a sword with the wax ear of the high priest's servant adhering to it, and also packets of caramels which they distribute among the crowd. In their midst are borne banners, lanterns, the images of the Virgin and of Christ carrying His cross. The corporation is preceded by the *maceros*, men whose shaven faces you have seen a hundred times in the pictures of Bellini and Ghirlandaio. I had often wondered whether the Middle Ages had not impressed an individual stamp upon the face which these later times had obliterated. In England the faces of most men seem to have lost

## PALMA DE MALLORCA

the old precision and singleness of meaning, as though modern civilisation had blurred them with many conflicting thoughts and lightly felt emotions. But in Spain, perhaps because its civilisation is not quite modern, the centuries have brought no change. It only needed the disguise which their office compels the mace-bearers to wear—hair falling to the shoulders, and a fringe which makes a straight line half an inch above the eyes—to translate them back to the fifteenth century. The faces are the same—the grave, hard features, the expression of serenity, half humorous and a little brutal. The members of the corporation are in evening dress. They appear to be worried, rather hot, and much concerned to prevent the melting wax of the candles from dripping upon their trousers.

Finally, towering unsteadily in the air, comes the image of the crucified Christ. Its outstretched arms almost touch the walls on either side of the narrow street. The images carried in the earlier part of the procession had been banal and realistic—the productions of those factories of religious waxworks which flood modern Catholicism with a stream of spurious sentiment. The figure of the *Sangre* is wisely conventional. It is shrouded in a purple veil. Long hair falls down the back; from the waist to the knee hangs a purple skirt, richly embroidered and shining with stones; the breast is covered with passionate,

## RELIGIOUS REALISM

exotic flowers. Even the crowds, to whom the spectacle had become merely a holiday show, felt a moment's awe and dropped upon the knee as this figure of splendour and tragedy moved sorrowfully past.

The religion of the Mediterranean is untouched by Northern mysticism. It is terribly explicit. Every stage of the drama which happened two thousand years ago at Jerusalem is re-enacted with a literal detail which the imagination rebels against. The vacant cross is set up behind the high altar of the cathedral, a strip of white linen hanging down from the arms, and the figures of Mary and John on either side. The choristers in the gallery simulate the earthquake by a sudden deafening stamping of the feet. The figure of the crucified is carried upon a bier from the foot of the cross with all the pomp of funeral and buried in the tomb. The morning of Easter is celebrated by the ceremony of the *Encuentra*, when the image of Mary meets that of Christ with music in the market-place. Then when Palma, by the rehearsal of so many moving scenes, has at last persuaded itself into a kind of woe, it flocks to the Plaza de Toros, and in the spectacle of the slaughter of six young bulls regains its normal cheerfulness.

\* \* \*

If you have an ear that listens to the unspoken voices of what we obtusely call inanimate objects,



## PALMA DE MALLORCA

you will have discovered in your journeyings to and fro that the temper of a town is often something very different from the temper of the people that inhabit it. The two are rarely in complete accord. Often they appear to be unintelligible to one another, sometimes mutually contemptuous, sometimes fiercely at feud. In general this dislocation between a town and its inhabitants is produced by age. Towns are naturally conservative. Their memories are far-reaching and tenacious. They have a difficulty in accommodating themselves to our ways, having already adapted themselves to the modes of distant generations. Towns are only less unchanging than a landscape; while of all men townsmen are the most mutable. One has always a little pity for a town that is obviously conservative when it is in the hands of a radical populace. But in Southern Europe the democracy has the art of possessing itself of a town that is aristocratic in its breeding with a wonderful sympathy and tact. The people have leisure, and leisure breeds dignity. They are not overawed by the relics of bygone splendour; they take them for granted, and yet appear to be not altogether insensible to their influence. They go about among their ancient palaces and churches with the ease of a man who is at home, and also with something of his half-conscious pride. I have seen beggars sitting in Palma Cathedral with their





A CORNER OF THE MARKET, PALMA



## THE TEMPER OF TOWNS

cloaks flung round them, not abashed at being surrounded by so much grandeur and yet not quite indifferent to it, but with an air of possession, like kings in their own palace. An Englishman has not the same manner of quiet familiarity with his ancient monuments. He enters a cathedral with a self-conscious air and with a respectful curiosity, as though it were a national museum. If he chances to visit a palace, his attitude is correct and deferential; but he cannot naturally assume the grand manner which the place demands; a certain air of insignificance and vulgarity settles upon him, and he is aware of it. He is said not to have broken with his past so radically as other peoples have broken with theirs. It is true, and it is just his unflinching respect for the past which prevents him from moving among ancient things with the simple calm of a people that does not distinguish the past from the present.

There appears to be no incompatibility of temper between the citizens of Palma and their city. But it should not be difficult for a modern people to inhabit Palma without friction, for although the city lived its great days long before Don Jaime the Conquistador rode in through the Moorish gate of Beb-alcofol on that New Year's Eve of 1229, it has the secret of preserving the serenity of youth. At one point, however, the city and the citizens have come into sharp col-

## PALMA DE MALLORCA

lision. The citizens have found the city walls unmodern or unhygienic, and therefore they are tearing them down with a vigour which they display in no other of their amusements. It is a formidable task, for they were some six hundred years in building. It is easy to upbraid Spaniards and Italians—especially Italians—for the vandalism with which they handle their immemorial towns. Of course, it is distressing that they have not the æsthetic eye and do not gladly live in insanitary slums because they once were palaces. Gasometers and electric standards and other disfiguring conveniences they might well leave to the northern barbarians who know no better. But it must be an oppressive thing to live beneath the weight of the dead hand of the past. The northern tourist with his guide-book in his hand is quite content to perambulate a town as though it were a museum, but it is another thing to have to live in a museum from year's end to year's end. I cannot feel unsympathetic with the activity of the Latin races who are anxious to let the breath of day into the museum atmosphere. They also want to be braced by the invigorating air of modern life, to breathe the good, thick factory smoke and the acrid fumes of petrol. For the life which brought these embattled towns into being was energetic and tumultuous, and if the Latin peoples are again to bring art to birth, it will not be by regretfully contemplating their





## II

### THE COAST

WHEN EN Pere Martel gave his dinner-party to King Jaime on that memorable spring afternoon in 1229, the King asked him, "What is the extent of Mallorca?" The shipmaster supposed that it was about three hundred miles round. His figures were nearer the truth than those of medieval travellers usually were, but still, he almost doubled its extent; for, according to the modern ordnance surveyor, the circumference of the island is two hundred and sixty-five kilometres, and assuming that a kilometre is exactly five-eighths of a mile, which I believe it is not, that should be, according to my calculation, a hundred and sixty-five miles and five-eighths. Such is the actual extent of the coast-line, and such, I suppose, it would seem if you were to sail round it in a *falucha*; but when you are actually within the island and travelling round it on foot, the truth is that you rarely come across the sea at all.

Mallorca is curious and notable among islands for this reason, that, although it is most indis-

## FEAR OF THE SEA

putably "a kingdom in the sea where God pleased to put it," as King Jaime's barons informed him, yet the sea appears to have a kind of terror for it. In remote ages, when the Mediterranean was still an enclosed lake, and Africa was joined to Europe at Gibraltar and Sicily, the Balearic Islands formed a continuation of the Sierra Nevada of Spain. Mallorca is still, as it were, an island in spite of itself. It is impossible to conceive of its being married to the sea as Venice is yearly married by her priests. She breeds a race of men who are lovers of the soil rather than of the sea. Although the serene and smiling Mediterranean seems to entice them to the coast, they have turned their backs upon it and built their towns inland. Palma, it is true, lies along the shores of its bay, but until the other day it was careful to keep entrenched within its guardian walls. With this one exception, there is not another town upon the coast, scarcely even a fishing-village, and only one or two timid and unfrequented ports.

This dread of the sea is an inheritance from other times, not without its reasonable foundation. It was not so much a fear of the sea itself, which, after all, is a very placid sea with only occasional freaks of treachery, but rather a fear of those who sailed upon it. A frontier is always a source of unrest, even when there is only a single nation on the other side of it, and that not

## THE COAST

a hostile one; but the frontier of Mallorca, which is its coast, was exposed to all the nations who have ever learned to make themselves at home upon the sea—from the Phœnician to the Turk—and the sea has a curiously dissolvent action upon the morals of a nation. Fear of the vengeance of the Moors whom they had dispossessed, and of the depredations of the Corsairs, caused the Mallorquins to draw away from their natural frontier, so that even to-day when you sail round the desolate coast you appear to be passing by an uninhabited island. The towns lie high and dry, three or four miles from the shore, stretching out a white road like a tentacle to a little fortified port or a watch-tower, from which the beacons once flamed the warning of the enemy's approach. Thus it is that when you make the circuit of Mallorca, you travel along a road that shuns the coast, and have little sense of being upon an island at all.

From the traveller's point of view the coast of Mallorca is not three hundred miles, as En Pere Martel said it was; nor yet a hundred and sixty-five, as the modern ordnance surveyor says it is, but only about thirty. It stretches from Andraitx, the westernmost town of the island, to the point where the road begins to zigzag down into the valley of Soller. After leaving Soller, the *carretera*, or rather the mule-track, climbs up into the mountains, loses itself in a labyrinth of



## COLLADO DE LA BATALLA

mighty ravines, and does not strike the sea again until it reaches the port of Pollensa on the east coast.

\* \* \*

It was a burning noon when I set out from Palma to walk the twenty miles of *carretera* that lead to Andraitx. The broad road, dust smothered and deserted, wound among pines and olive groves. On the right hand rose the spurs of the western chain of mountains, covered with pine and ilex and carob trees; on the left stretched the smooth savannahs of the bay. This smiling paradise was King Jaime's first impression of the island he had come to win back for Christendom. Landing at the western extremity of the island, he found his advance opposed by the Moorish army midway between Andraitx and Palma. On the left-hand side of the road, beneath the shade of a giant pine, a stone pillar surmounted by an iron cross marks the spot where the battle was joined on the 12th of September, 1229. As I passed over it the ancient battlefield was drowsy with the peace of the May afternoon. No sounds broke upon the silence but the hammering of an old road-mender and the plaintive Moorish melody that a shepherd boy was singing among the fields. They ceased as I went by, and curious, uncomprehending eyes were fixed upon the traveller.

## THE COAST

On the road in Mallorca you can't help feeling self-conscious. You will find that daily you provide a spectacle, if not for gods, at all events for Mallorquin men, women, and children. To see a man walking from nowhere to nowhere, with no reason that would appear convincing to a *guardia civil*, merely for the pleasure of doing it, when he might cover the distance with no appreciably greater expenditure of time or money in a *diligencia*, is a recreation that happens only twice or thrice in their lifetime. Moreover, you will make the discovery, if you have not made it before, that your nationality is not the abstract entity you might have supposed it to be, merely a glow or ardour residing in the inmost consciousness, but a really definitely and physical thing—a kind of British X-rays, which emanate from your body and penetrate walls, doors, and shuttered windows without encountering the least resistance. A town when you enter it may be plunged profoundly in the peace of its afternoon siesta, but although your footfalls are as silent as a cat's you will awaken it as infallibly as if you marched through preceded by a military band playing the national anthem. The shutters open as if a magic had touched them, and the windows disgorge perplexed and curious heads; the cafés empty their crowds of domino players into the *plaza*; the children in the nun's school cease to chant the dynasties of kings and pour out into the street

## THE TELL-TALE RAYS

to gape at the phenomenon. It would appear that every stage of your journey from Charing Cross had been accurately reported in the local press, and that you had arrived at the very minute of the scheduled time.

What is more astonishing still is that this influence of nationality which your person radiates proclaims you to be not merely a *forastero*, but an *inglés*. In the manner of those retiring animals who assume the colour of their environment as a means to leading an unmolested life, I had bought a golden-green corduroy coat with striped drill breeches, and for a collar substituted a yellow handkerchief with purple spots. I had shod my feet with *alpagartas*, a kind of heel-less canvas shoe with a hemp sole, and found that walking without the accustomed cheerful noise of nailed boots was almost as mysterious as walking without a shadow. In every outward circumstance I know that I was the counterpart of a Mallorquin, because I had seen my double driving goats to a fair. But you cannot trifle with your birthright. The disguise was of no avail. The secret rays sent out their confidential, truthful messages, and the tell-tale whisper passed from mouth to mouth, "*Mire—inglés!*"

The curiosity which the traveller in Mallorca excites during his day's progress is concentrated into a formidable inquisition when he arrives at



## THE COAST

night at the *fonda*. Not the least glorious of the liberties of Britain consists in this, that the subject can enter any inn in England, Scotland, Wales, or Ireland, and if he has the price of a bed and breakfast in his pocket, these two prime necessities of life will be given him and no questions asked. In Latin countries there is more of the talk about Liberty and less of the thing. To apply for shelter is often as involved a process as if one should apply for outdoor relief. It is not enough that a man has an empty stomach and aching limbs—he must also have a name and a native town and a province and a profession, and many other things which he commonly goes abroad in order to forget. The Mallorquin is hospitable in the open-hearted and open-handed manner of earlier times; he is not suspicious, but he is curious, as all men are curious in small communities where each knows the other's business, and a certain importance still attaches to the act of travelling. Mallorquin families ramify all over the island, and if some rare occasion obliges a man to visit a neighbouring town, he stays with his grandfather or his aunt or his second cousin. The *fonda*, therefore, at all events, in the smaller towns, is the place for the evening's recreation rather than for the night's repose.

It must be admitted that the Mallorquin *fonda* is a disappointment. In Mallorca there is all the



## THE MALLORQUIN *FONDA*

material for the inn of the heart's desire. There are great wide-eaved buildings, with spacious courtyards and interior galleries, baronial kitchens, fire-places before which oxen could be roasted whole, ingle-nooks as large as a fair-sized parlour, with hams and sausages dependent from the rafters. But these are the *alquerias*, the old granges, many of them dating from the times of the Moors, which you may only visit for the ostensible purpose of begging a cup of cold water. I know none of them that have been converted to the uses of an inn. The *fonda* is a more trumpery affair. It is primarily a café, where it is naturally assumed that you will order nothing more nor less than a glass of black coffee, sweetened in the making to the degree which suits the *fondista's* palate, and a glass of *anisado*, the favourite Mallorquin liqueur. Stretched from the four corners of the ceiling to the acetylene gas-jet in the centre are paper festoons, conceived in a scheme of primary colours, which serve no purpose, utilitarian or æsthetic, except to provide roosting-places for the flies at night. Its decoration is unromantic. It is sprinkled with marble-topped tables. At the end of the room stands a counter, and fixed against the wall behind are several rows of shelves, crowded with polychromatic bottles of liqueur.

Such was the *fonda* at Calvia, a sad little village in this western corner of the island. I had

## THE COAST

tired of the interminable *carretera*, and decided to make a detour through the lost, hilly country that lies north of the *Collado de la Batalla*. The night was falling when I arrived at the inn, and going up to the *fondista* who was serving out drinks behind the counter with the air of a grandee of Spain, I asked, not for coffee or *anisado*, but for a bed. The clicking of the dominoes at half a dozen tables stopped instantaneously. The tension couldn't have been more strained if I had asked for his money or his life. A bed! It was a matter for the police. The Secretario of the village was sent for, not altogether because the occasion demanded quite such rigorous measures, but because he had the reputation of being fluent in the English tongue. If he still enjoys that reputation, it is thanks to my benevolent duplicity in pretending familiarity with the strange, personal idiom which he appeared himself to have invented. To do him justice, I must admit that he had a good working knowledge of the numerals up to ten. He held in his hand a sheet containing that printed inquisition which vexes the traveller in every country of the civilised world except Britain and America. By looking over his shoulder I was able to understand the questions as he translated them into his private dialect. The examination appeared to differ from that of a pedagogic nature only in the fact that it was not competitive. But it was more personal.

## THE SECRETARIO

What was my name? It was a very simple name, and I pronounced it slowly and distinctly. The Secretario, however, began to suggest a number of alternative pronunciations, and finally asked me to write it down. I produced a letter from my pocket and showed him the name written upon the envelope. The cloud which gathered on his brow told me that something was amiss. It appeared that my name was not at all what I had said it was. My name was "Esq." He found a difficulty in pronouncing "Esq.," and asked me how it was done. I explained that it was not pronounced at all—it was a kind of title which people conferred upon themselves. A title! He glanced at the drill trousers and at the handkerchief which flaunted with unseemly abandon where the collar should have been. But the Spaniards are a courteous people, and he made no comment. What was my province? I was not conscious of belonging to a province. A mental picture of the map of England gave no hint of one, so I informed him that in England we didn't have provinces. The reply seemed unsatisfactory, but he passed on to the next inquiry. My profession? Here I was at a loss for a convincing answer. But the position was becoming serious. A man who had two names, one of which he couldn't pronounce, who didn't know what province he came from and was uncertain of his profession! Unconsciously the Sec-



## THE COAST

retario threw a glance across the road. I noticed that it rested upon a door with the ominous word *carcel* inscribed upon it. If I was to escape incarceration, it was clearly time to be emphatic. I remembered the camera I was carrying, and replied that I made photographs. His face showed a light of understanding. A *retrata*! Then I would take his portrait? For how much—for twenty-five centimos? By all means. He was reassured. My confidence also was restored, and remembering that we had provinces in England after all, I hastened to add that mine was Canterbury. The situation was saved, and the Secretario said that I might have a bed.

\* \* \*

Andraitx lies among its orchards on the slope of a green amphitheatre of hills, looking down upon its port some four or five miles away. Round a shoulder of the bay the island of Dragonera, where the forces of the Conquistador landed, crouches dragon-like upon the waters. From Andraitx I struck northwards to the perilous coast which looks towards Spain. Here begins the twenty-mile stretch of road which hugs the sea. A cart-road leads from Andraitx up a narrowing valley and then diminishes into a mule-track. As you press upwards the orange and almond and fig trees are left behind; the ubiquitous olive also disappears, and you enter a region





ESTALLENCHS



## MALVASÍA OF BAÑALBUFAR

of steep ravines and broken escarpments, where the sturdy Aleppo pine grapples the red soil with tenacious roots. The narrow path runs along a terrace in the face of the cliff. On the one hand, the naked mountains shoot into the sky ; on the other, some hundreds of feet below, lies a glittering expanse of bright indigo, enclosing pools of clearest purple and emerald, with a white fringe where the waters chafe the roots of rocks. The only trace, of human life is a ruined watch-tower, uselessly guarding the barren coast ; not a sail on the sea, not a roof among the trees ; utter solitude and stillness from the peaks of the mountains to the shining floor of the sea. The landscape and seascape make a harmony of three colours—blue of the sea, bright green of the pines, and blood-red of the soil—the tricolour of the Mediterranean. After leaving Andraitx it is four hours before you come again to the home of men. At Estallenchs, a little white, flat-roofed village, slipping down the steep slope of the hills, the *carretera* begins again. Four miles beyond the cliffs form a kind of cup, lined with terraces of vineyards, and in the midst of the cup lies the ancient town of Bañalbufar, famous for its *malvasía*, the finest wine of the island.

One morning, when the shadows were still long in the streets, I went to the *bodega* of the Baronia. It is an ancient castle, standing on a terrace overhanging the sea, enclosing a courtyard

## THE COAST

with a carved well-head in the midst. The vaults were dark and cool, lined with a double row of capacious barrels. Into one of these the steward dipped a rod, to the end of which was attached a small vessel like an inverted candle extinguisher, and ladled out two wineglassfuls of the pale golden wine. It is a fortunate thing for some wines and many plays that they are only submitted to an indulgent after-dinner criticism. The seven-o'clock-in-the-morning mood is less complacent; the test more severe. But if wines have their special and appropriate hours, assuredly the *malvasía* of Bañalbufar is an early morning wine. It has a kind of matutinal freshness which in the midnight restaurant would perhaps evaporate into insipidity. It assuages rather than inflames the mind; it has no passion in it; the soil of the island gives it a character like that of the people, mild and suave, but a little grave. I am not sure that it would travel well, although once it used to travel to imperial Rome. But when it is drunk in a cool Moorish courtyard, upon the edge of the sea, when the sun is still low upon the water, it yields up all its spirit and moves the mind to memories of the quiet pauses in the stormy life of the Mediterranean.

After leaving Bañalbufar it is possible to keep still in company with the sea by following a path that dips down into a wide, flat valley; but the *carretera* makes a long inland circuit by way of



## THE VALLEY OF SOLLER

Esporlas and joins the high road from Palma to Valldemosa, the delightful valley at the head of which stands the convent where Georges Sand spent her winter in Mallorca with Chopin. The road regains the coast at Miramar, and from thence winds along the mountain-side, high above the sea, passing the little town of Deyá perched securely on a hill-top, until it turns sharply to the south and begins to descend into the valley of Soller.

If you arrive at this turning-point about the time of sunset, you will have a vision of as great beauty and splendour as any which this island has to offer. At the end of the valley rises a mountain-barrier as sheer as the wall of a gigantic fortress, its northern extremity buttressed by Puig Mayor, the loftiest mountain in the island, rising to nearly five thousand feet. As the level light of the sun strikes the naked rock of the mountain-tops they glow with pure scarlet, as if washed with blood. Their skirts are hidden beneath the dark green of the pines; the lower slopes are covered with the silvery mist of the olive groves, which descend in innumerable terraces; at their foot the wide, level valley swells out in one luxurious orchard—oranges, apricots, lemons, figs, almonds, and here and there a single mast-like palm. In the midst of this orchard gleam the white houses of the town, clustering thickly round the church and scattering in isolated dots all along the plain. A torrent

## THE COAST

comes down from the cleft in the mountains and cuts a ravine through the midst of the town. Three miles away shines the little blue lake which forms the port, and beyond it lies the open sea. Very rightly did Dameto, the seventeenth-century chronicler of Mallorca, say of Soller that it was "the Tempe or Paradise of this kingdom and an epilogue of the gardens of the world."

\* \* \*

The town of Soller is rapidly losing its ancient character, but it preserves the memory of the Corsairs more vividly than any other town in the island. Every year, on the 11th of May, it holds a *fiesta* to celebrate the anniversary of the victory of the men of Soller over Ochiali and his mixed army of Turks and Moors in the year 1561. The church bells are rung, a procession passes through the streets, and down at the port the *Simulacra* takes place, a kind of pageant of the whole bloody business, when men in Moorish garb land in the harbour, seize and carry off the women, and finally allow themselves to be routed by the victorious Christians. The procession has a religious character, for it escorts from the parish church to the Oratory of the Hospital the very image of the Virgin which was mutilated by the Moorish scimitars. But it also includes boys and girls in fancy dress; the boys with gilt cardboard crowns and trailing scarlet robes, representing



LAS DOÑAS VALENTAS DE CAN TAMANY





## THE 11TH OF MAY

the Corsair chiefs ; the girls gorgeously dressed in the silks and embroideries of the sixteenth century, their fingers hidden beneath rings, and their bodices and skirts covered with the very chains and crosses and precious stones that lured the African sea-robbers to Soller three hundred years ago. They personify the famous *Valentas Doñas de Can Tamany*, two valiant ladies who slew a Moor as he was breaking in through the window of their house with a bar or *tranca* of the door. The bar itself is carried triumphantly in the procession, adorned with myrtle. At night bands play in the street, the *plaza* is ablaze with fireworks, and the whole populace gives itself up to rejoicing as though the victory were not merely a historical memory, but a deliverance from a present danger.

The obvious sincerity of the rejoicings gives a more significant meaning to the title which has been given to the Corsairs—"the scourge of Christendom." In Soller, as indeed throughout the islands, the people never speak of the Corsairs, but only of the *Moros*. It is true that ever since the Moors were driven out of Mallorca by the Catalan conquerors in 1231 they brooded over vengeance and schemed for the re-conquest of their island kingdom ; but they only became an intolerable scourge to the island when the Turk came westward from Constantinople and taught them how to sail and to plunder. The time and

## THE COAST

the place made the western Mediterranean in the sixteenth century a happy hunting-ground for sea-robbers. The wealth of the newly discovered Americas was pouring into the ports of Spain and Italy. From the East came the heavily laden argosies bringing silks and spices and ivory from the Indies. Through the straits of Gibraltar at one end, and the channel between Sicily and Tunis at the other, the treasure ships sailed into the western basin of the Mediterranean as into a net. The north coast of Africa seemed to have been formed by nature to be the home of pirates ; a coast that was indented with creeks and shallow harbours where the pirate galleys drawing but little water could take refuge ; a sea that was visited by sudden and treacherous storms which made pursuit difficult for the unwieldy Spanish galleons ; a country with an impotent government, where the Corsairs could horde and enjoy their spoils with impunity. " Before these Corsairs have been absent from their abodes much longer than perhaps twenty or thirty days," said Diego de Haedo, writing of Tunis, " they return home rich, with their vessels crowded with captives, and ready to sink with wealth ; in one instant, and with scarce any trouble, reaping the fruits of all that the avaricious Mexican and greedy Peruvian have been digging from the bowels of the earth with such toil and sweat, and the thirsty merchant with such manifest perils

## THE CORSAIRS

has for so long been scraping together, and has been so many thousand leagues to fetch away, either from the east or west, with inexpressible danger and fatigue. Thus they have crammed most of the houses, the magazines and all the shops of this Den of Thieves with gold, silver, pearls, amber, spices, drugs, silks, cloths, velvets, etc., whereby they have rendered this city the most opulent in the world: insomuch that the Turks call it, not without reason, their India, their Mexico, their Peru.”

The Corsair fleet was to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries what the Foreign Legion is to the twentieth—a refuge for all the renegades and desperate spirits of Europe, an oblivion where men could drown despair in a life of hardship and violence. Their captains were Turks or apostate Christians, their fighting-men mostly Moors, their rowers Christian slaves. Their history is nothing but a monotonous series of plundering raids. Without arts, except those of seamanship and slaughter, destroyers of wealth which others created, they contributed nothing to the sum of things but a certain kind of brutal romance. As their confidence grew with their strength, they aimed at bigger prey than papal galleys and Spanish treasure-ships. Their armies sacked the cities of the Mediterranean shores. The inhabitants of the Balearic Islands lived in continual dread of their raids. Pollensa was at-



## THE COAST

tacked in 1543, Valldemosa in 1552; Andraitx was pillaged in the following year, and again in 1555. Soller, next to the capital the wealthiest town of Mallorca, inevitably excited their greed. The raid upon Soller is typical of the expeditions which kept the Mallorquins in terror of these nomads of the sea and drove them from the coast of their island.

On the night of the 10th of May, 1561, Soller slept uneasily. There were rumours of a great Corsair fleet which had anchored in the harbours of Ibiza, and was said to be waiting for the full moon before it bore down on the north coast of Mallorca. In the evening of that day the miracle-working crucifix had been carried through the streets. Double guards were put in the fortress at the port; the cannon were ready loaded. Many of the people had carried their valuables to the church for safety. Orders were given for the women and children to be ready to take the road to the mountains at the first signal of danger.

It was the night of full moon. The shadow of the church struck in sharp outline against the gleaming gravel of the *plaza*. The heavily scented air of the warm, spring night hung like incense over the orange groves. In the stillness the water rippled over the stones in the bed of the torrent and made a music in the market-place. From time to time the narrow streets resounded with the clatter of a horse's





THE TORRENTE, SOLLER



## THE ALARM

hoofs—the guard going round to see that the sentries were at their posts. Within the tall, quiet houses was distress of women and love made keen by the dread of danger.

On the little breeze that rises just before the dawn there came the long moan of a conch, blown by one of the watchers at the port. The slave-driven galleys of the Corsairs were seen creeping into the harbour. There followed two sudden roars from the cannon, and then the bells gave tongue in all the steeples of the town. The town awoke with a cry; the people rushed into the streets, half dazed with sleep and terror. The priest was already at the altar of the parish church saying Mass. The men ran to the *plaza*, buckling on their swords. There the captain of the Soller militia, Juan Angelats, was busy marshalling his forces. The men knelt down and kissed their daggers where the guard of the hilt made a cross with the blade, while Angelats invoked the protection of the Virgin. Then the little army got to its feet and marched off down the Calle Nueva in the direction of the port. The women hastily made bundles of all that they treasured; those that had mules loaded the panniers with precious things—caskets containing the household jewels, rich embroideries, finely worked brass lamps, rosaries, crosses, and bags of ducats. The din of the tocsin drowned the screaming of the children. The dazed old men

## THE COAST

gathered up useless trifles. The priests brought the sacred Host out of the churches. At last, after much precious time had been wasted, the crowd of fugitives began to stream out of the town towards the mountains.

When the cannons spoke at the port Ochiali knew that the raid upon Soller would not be child's play. He withdrew from the harbour and directed his ships to a place known as the *Coll de la Illa*, where he landed his men without resistance. Then the Corsairs, seventeen hundred strong, divided into two bands, one of which was to march straight up the road leading from the port to the town, the other to make a circuit by Binibassi on the north-east and enter the town by the Calle de la Luna. Swiftly and secretly the second party, led by the famous Izuff, hurried across the moonlit country, forded the river, trampled through the dewy orchards, and suddenly burst upon the fugitives as they were pouring out of the town. The flight had been delayed too long, for some had wasted the precious moments in gathering together all the household goods that they were loath to leave behind; others vainly believed that the Moors would never succeed in actually reaching the town. A cry of terror went up from the women when they saw the white turbans of the Moors among the orange groves and their scimitars shining in the moonlight. They threw down their treasures,



## A NIGHT OF TERROR

snatched their children up into their arms, and fled back to the town. The dark, sinewy figures flew after them, caught them by the skirts and by the hair, threw them down, and savagely bound their wrists. A knife-thrust quickly ended the feeble resistance of the old men. Then a rush was made to the houses. The invaders went from room to room, hurled everything of value into the streets, and set fire to the rifled houses. The doors of the church were battered down. The two priests who threw themselves in front of the tide were cut to pieces. Chalices, crosses, reliquaries, embroidered frontals, were snatched from the altars. The Moslems hacked with knives at the images of the saints, and mutilated that of the Virgin with special fury. The carved furniture was piled together in the nave and fired. When they had spent their fury on the symbols of the misbelievers' faith they returned to the streets to collect their booty and their captives. The white light of dawn showed the streets strewn with the plunder of the houses and the bleeding bodies of the old men. All the women who were strong enough to work as slaves or beautiful enough to grace the Moorish harems were bound together in gangs. They were dragged from their knees—a blow with the flat of the sword accompanied the command to march—the booty was shouldered, and captors and captives moved off towards the ships.

## THE COAST

But all this time the men of Soller had not been idle. At the bridge over the river outside the town they had met the main army of the Corsairs, just as the news reached them that the other band had entered the town by the Calle de la Luna, and was already plundering the houses and doing violence to the women. Their first impulse was to return and defend their wives and children, but the counsel of Angelats was that they should await the attack of the oncoming Moors. They fell upon the invaders with fury, and after a savage fight drove them back to the shore. Then they hurried back to the town, reinforced by the bandits who in those days infested the hills, with their lean, savage hunting-dogs. As soon as the Corsairs saw their retreat cut off, they turned on their captives and buried their knives in the bodies of the women and girls. Then, flinging down their treasure, they fled as best they could to the ships, pursued by men and dogs; and the chronicler remarks that it was noticed that never before had the dogs shown such mad fury as when they tore down the flying Moors.

The galleys were already being pushed off from the shore. All through the night the Christian slaves, chained to their oars, had listened feverishly to the distant shouting and firing in the town, hoping against hope that the defeat of the Corsairs might give them back their liberty.



SOLLER AND PUIG MAYOR





## THE MORNING AFTER

Now the boatswains ran along the plank between the banks of rowers and with frenzy plied the lash on their naked backs. The fugitives dashed through the water amidst a shower of stones from the pursuers. The slaves bitterly bent over their oars, and the long craft shot out into the sea.

The victors returned and began to set their town in order. The dead were carried into the houses. Messengers were dispatched to Palma to fetch physicians and balms for the wounded. The plunder, scattered all along the road to the port, was gathered up and collected in the market-place, where each man identified his own. The morning wind blew away the smoke of the smouldering houses. The May sun shone down into the valley upon the gleaming town lying as peacefully among its orchards as on any other morning of the year. But the memory of that wild night has persisted through the centuries, and it will never perish while the bells still ring on the 11th of May and the mutilated Virgin is carried through the streets from the Oratory of the Hospital to revisit the scene of her desecration.

### III

## THE MOUNTAINS

MALLORCA is the only island of the Baleares which has a true *sierra*. The whole extent of the northern, or more accurately the north-western, coast, from Andraitx at the west to the port of Pollensa at the east, is buttressed by a chain of mountains, Alpine in character, opposing an abrupt escarpment towards the distant coast of Spain, and sloping in gentler gradations on the side towards Africa. At two points the range is broken by the pleasant valleys of Soller and Vall-demosà. Soller lies almost at the foot of the highest peak of the chain, *Puig Mayor*.

As the eagle flies—for I never saw a crow crossing the *Puig Mayor*—it is not more than twenty-four miles from Soller to the port of Pollensa. But in a district where the altitude varies from sea-level to more than four thousand feet, and the road from a macadamised *carretera* to a track rather more rugged than the bed of a torrent, a geographical mile is merely a convention of

## THE ELASTICITY OF MILES

speech. It is a relative, elastic, shifting entity, as movable as the feasts of the Church. In the morning, when you are walking with the Mediterranean spread out at your feet like a map, it may be only a matter of a few mouthfuls of intoxicating air and the chorus of a song; towards noon it begins to swell out into its full complement of seventeen hundred and sixty yards; and between two and four, especially if you are climbing up a stony mule-track that appears to have been untouched since the Moors left it some six or seven centuries ago, it utterly confutes the calculations of the painstaking people who draw up tables of measures for the arithmetic books and demonstrates the lamentable and incurable mendacity of statistics. And herein lies the wisdom of the Mallorquin—and for that matter of the countryman all over Europe—in reckoning distance not by miles or kilometres, but by hours. He views the meddlesome activity of a paternal government in pegging out the *carretera* into hundreds of metres and thousands of metres with a benevolent contempt. The Minister of Public Instruction at Madrid may decree that it is forty kilometres from Soller to Puerta-Pollensa, but he knows better, and calls it roundly ten hours. Therefore, if you are well advised, you will make a two days' journey of it. Moreover, happily for you, an inspired youth, in some year of the thirteenth century which I have forgotten, discovered

## THE MOUNTAINS

a miraculous image of the Virgin on the slope of a hill almost precisely midway between Soller and Pollensa. The folk of the time very properly built a shrine about it and instituted pilgrimages ; so that even if you yourself are not traveling on the pious business of a pilgrimage, you may spend a night in the *hospedería* at Lluch and sleep gratuitously in the damp sheets which the monks provide for you.

There are two ways of walking or riding from Soller to Lluch—for driving is out of the question. From Biniaraix, a village about two miles north-east of Soller, you can take the mule-track which climbs like a staircase up the steep ravine known as the *Barranco*, and then, at the summit, leaving the sugar-loaf Puig de Olofra on your right, pass through a long, stony, high-lying valley until you come to the cascades and the clear blue-green pools of *Gorch Blau*. Or you can follow a path which takes the seaward side of Puig Mayor and brings you down into the valley again about ten minutes beyond the gorge. Here the two routes converge, and here you find yourself in the very heart of the mountain rampart which runs along the whole of the northern coast. It is the point of intersection of three valleys. Behind lies the *Pla de Cuba*, along which you have come from Biniaraix ; in front, a narrow ravine through which the *Torrente de Pareys* thunders to the sea ; and a third valley swings round to the right, breaking a



## CONCHITA

way through the hills down into the southern plain. Taking the cart road which runs along a ledge of this third valley, and then leaving it to plunge down through a wood, after two hours' walking you come suddenly upon Lluch, snugly hidden in a bend of the valley.

There is no cordial against fatigue like a sight of the sea, and so I chose the seaward route from Soller to *Gorch Blau*. But no sooner had I scaled the left shoulder of Puig Mayor than I was wrapped in a cloak of mist, and from thence to Calsreys, where the road begins to dip into the valley again, I saw nothing but Conchita looming immense in the mist a few paces ahead with her panniers protruding like kettle-drums on either side of her, and Pepe perched sparrow-like aloft. Conchita, I should have said, was the mule, and Pepe the muleteer. Like Agag, Conchita walked delicately, but with a better reason ; for besides Pepe and my valise, not to mention a potato omelette and a bottle of wine, she was carrying a matter of fifty or sixty pounds avoirdupois of as solid red sandstone as ever went to the building of Don Jaime's cathedral at Palma. I had already formed an unfavourable view of her character. Her fastidiousness in picking her way among the boulders convinced me that she was taking an exaggerated and feminine view of the difficulties of the route ; it seemed, moreover, to convey a reproach that I should have exposed

## THE MOUNTAINS

her to the hardships of this unnecessary journey. It was not until we arrived at Lluch that I learned the whole truth and regretted the uncharitableness of my judgment. Now, her embarrassment came about in this way.

I never travel quite at ease unless I have with me half a pound of China tea and a volume of English prose. I scarcely know which indulgence is the more vicious ; for it is obvious that the art of travel consists much less in changing one's customary degrees of latitude and longitude than in changing one's inveterate habits of mind and body. The choice of a book, when it is to be the companion of one's solitude for many weeks, is not a matter to be left to the hazard of the moment. While I was hesitating in the election, among many alternatives I remembered that a certain professor had once told me that a man who had not read Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* was still fundamentally uneducated. At the time I thought the discrimination arbitrary, as it left me outside the pale ; and yet, although I took no steps to place myself within the ranks of the cultured, the remark never ceased to rankle. It occurred to me that now at last, was an opportunity for removing the stigma, and so, having had the seven volumes sent out from London, I threw the first of them into the valise. I noticed, however, that the famous fifteenth chapter formed the first of the second volume,

## MR. GIBBON'S SCRIBBLE

and therefore it was necessary to pack in Vol. II together with Vol. I. Just then there came into my head that remark of the Duke of Cumberland, who, when Gibbon came to present him with the third volume, which was dedicated to His Royal Highness, exclaimed, "What! what! another damned thick square book! Always scribble, scribble, scribble, eh, Mr. Gibbon!" A curiosity to know what immortal scribble was contained in this third volume compelled me to put it in along with the other two. Now, it is a fact that a man seldom stops half-way when once he has begun upon an action that he is half ashamed of, and so, well aware that this was a ridiculous provision for a journey that offers so much entertainment in the matter of natural scenery, I hastily bundled the four remaining volumes into the valise.

"Mules have this advantage over railways," I said, "that they make no charge for excess luggage."

The advantage was mine, but the disadvantage was Conchita's. It was clear even to Pepe's intelligence that in weight and substance a potato omelette and a bottle of wine were no match for the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Accordingly, he effected an equipoise by filling the other pannier with the three rocks of red sandstone, which caused Conchita to walk with such lack of ease.



## THE MOUNTAINS

As I had paid eighteen pesetas for the conveyance from Soller to Pollensa of myself, my valise, and also of the sandstone rocks, although not actually stipulating for the latter, Pepe naturally inquired, as soon as we were entered into the cloud at the summit of the shoulder of the Puig, whether I did not intend to mount. I declined, as I had not the heart to add to Conchita's embarrassments, whereupon Pepe, being untroubled by similar scruples, promptly scrambled up on to the vacant seat. The sight of Pepe enthroned upon the sheepskin caused me some unreasonable annoyance. The arrangement, I reflected, was undoubtedly the one that gave the greatest happiness to the greatest number, since it was certain that I preferred to walk, that Pepe preferred to ride, and that of two evils Conchita preferred that Pepe should ride rather than I. But it was also an arrangement that involved a nicety in the matter of etiquette. As the flocks of various owners are pastured on the slopes of the Puig, the path to Lluch is intersected by many gates. Now, to stand haughtily on one side while Pepe was compelled to descend from his perch in the cloud to open them, seemed an excessive waiting upon dignity, an illiberal exaction of the value of the eighteen pesetas to the uttermost centimo. On the other hand, to open them myself and wait deferentially until Conchita's stern was well clear of the radius of the closing gate seemed to verge



## ARAB MELODIES

upon the other extreme of obsequiousness. A possible solution of the difficulty might have been to have walked a considerable distance ahead and so to have allowed the intervening mist to screen the discourtesy of shutting the gate upon the advancing Pepe. But the mist was so thick and the track so ill-defined that in this way we might have parted company altogether. The journey resolved itself, therefore, into a prolonged triumphal progress for Pepe. At intervals of a few hundred yards I waited for him like a flunkey at his lord's park gates, while he received the homage with undisguised and impish glee.

“The advantage of railways over mules,” I reflected, “is that they do not raise the problem of the social order in so acute a form.”

Pepe, but for his eyes, which were beautiful as a toad's, would have been an ugly imp; but, like most ugly children, he had a divine voice. Or rather, he had two voices, one of which corresponded to the imp in his nature, and the other to the divinity. As we groped our way through the mist he crooned to Conchita plaintive melodies that had all Arabia in them—the very same, no doubt, that the turbaned Moors had chanted as they passed along this same track in the distant centuries before Pepe's forefathers had dispossessed them of their *isla dorada*. It was a tender, languorous voice, and as he sang I saw the glittering courts of the Alhambra, full of the

## THE MOUNTAINS

heat and peace of the long, sleepy afternoon, and the dusky, sloe-eyed daughters of Granada steeping their jewelled wrists in the cool depths of the fountains and——

“*Arré! Arré!*” came the rasping voice which the vocation of donkey driving seems inevitably to produce all the world over, and we were back in the comfortless mist again, and the three rocks of sandstone and the seven thick, square volumes were drumming most damnably against Conchita’s ribs.

\*            \*  
\*

It was dusk when we entered the sandy *plaza*, set with its regular alleys of plane trees, in front of the collegiate church of Nuestra Señora de Lluç. This holy spot, according to the chronicler Dameto, is the Loretto, the Montserrat or Pilar of the island kingdom; but it wears the aspect neither of age nor of sanctity. Rather it gives an impression of prosperity and solidity, and conveys the indefinable suggestion of a substantial banking account somewhere in the background. It is a caravansary of spacious, unsightly buildings erected to house the pilgrims who come to pay their devotions to the Black Virgin, whom you may see for ten centimos in the chapel. The place seemed already sufficiently vast, but the masons were at work upon it when we arrived, raising another of those forbidding structures



PEPE AND CONCHITA AT LLUCH





## NUESTRA SEÑORA DE LLUCH

which appear to be designed to combine the maximum of solidity with the minimum of comfort. A hearty lay brother clapped me on the back by way of greeting, and led me to my bedroom through resounding corridors, whose damp plaster walls retain even in March the icy chill of December. There in the deepening twilight I consumed the remnant of the potato omelette and the bottle of wine. The rules of the convent do not actually prescribe dining in one's bedroom. In the *plaza* is a wine-shop where, besides wine, you can buy bread, cheese, and *ensaimadas* (a kind of sugared bun—it should be eaten warm from the oven, but they make it perfectly nowhere outside Palma); and attached to the monastery is a kitchen where a good woman provides many of the things necessary for human existence, exclusive of butter, milk, and meat.

In the evening, wandering among the dismal labyrinth of corridors, I heard the murmur of a chant. I followed in the direction of the sound, and opening a door I felt a sensation of space about me, and discovered that I was in the western gallery of the church. Below me, the dark nave gaped like the mouth of a pit. Presently I discerned a crowd of figures seated on benches which ran parallel with the length of the nave, facing a chapel on the south side of the church. A faint light came from the altar of the

## THE MOUNTAINS

chapel. Just at the foot of the steps separating the chapel from the nave was a choir of boys, sitting on stools ranged in a semicircle. As I watched, an aged priest took a key, to which a long white ribbon was attached, and unlocked the door of the tabernacle. Men and boys fell on their knees before the monstrance which contained the Blessed Sacrament.

In shrill, nasal voices the boys began to sing the Litany of the Saints. The harsh invocations, alternating with the sullen murmur of the response, produced a sense of tedium, which the changelessness of the repetitions carried to the very verge of pain. Very soon I grew weary of the chant and wished for the end, for I was still tired after the walk over the mountain. I marvelled how the men in the nave below, who had been labouring since the early morning, could bear to kneel rigidly there on the bitter, hard stones, listening to this endless refrain, when the burdensome day was so long and the precious night so short. I was astonished at the harshness of the Church in imposing this mechanical exercise upon her children at the close of day, and I wondered whether her unfailing mundane wisdom had not for once deserted her.

“If she would retain her children,” I said, “she must show herself more kindly and intelligent. She must look to the heretics, and make her worship, like theirs, pleasant and full of ease. She

## THE LITANY

must provide comfort for the body, and entertain the mind with bright and ingenious novelties. She must abandon her vain repetitions. She must march with the times, accommodate herself to modern improvements. This torture of the limbs, this dark vault of a church, this interminable index of forgotten names—this will never do. She must abandon it all, or her children will abandon her ! ”

*Sancte Michá-el, Sancte Gabrí-el, Sancte Raphá-el*—chanted the boys, but no musical notation could ever express the violence of the stress with which they clung to the long, penultimate syllables. Slowly I began to realise that the Church’s wisdom had not failed her, after all. At the close of a day of manual toil the mind is no less spent than the body. Behind its dull material rampart it is drowsy and hard to reach. Its channels of communication are obstructed ; the aching senses fail to bring any messages from the outer reasonable world. A flood of eloquence would spend itself ineffectually against those hardened, fleshly walls ; epigram could not penetrate them, or logic overleap them. But the inflexible rhythm of the Litany, ceaselessly beating upon the ear, first conquers the outworks of the body, and at last possesses the inner citadel of the mind. This reiteration at first is almost physically painful ; one resists, and then one surrenders to it. An intoxication, like the intoxication of wine, creeps



## THE MOUNTAINS

through the limbs, and finally reaches and inflames the spirit. *Sancte Micha-el, Sancte Gabri-el, Sancte Rapha-el*, the great procession of the heavenly hierarchies began to unroll itself before the interior vision. *Sancte Grego-ri, Sancte Augusti-ne, Sancte Hieron-y-me*, the endless defile of doctors and saints went by; the strife of distant centuries was re-enacted; ancient controversies and the defeat of fatal heresies were recollected. *Sancte Stepha-ne, Sancte Lauren-ti, Sancte Vincen-ti*—tragic figures of the martyrs, recalling forgotten savageries and an age when faith was no less fierce than lust. *Sancte Bernar-de, Sancte Domin-ico, Sancte Francis-co*—names which spread out Europe like a map and showed it garrisoned with fortresses of prayer. *All Angels and Archangels, all Orders of Blessed Spirits, all Patriarchs and Prophets, all Holy Innocents*—in the pomp of the reverberating chant the pageant stretched out to the crack of doom. Then I saw how the life of this handful of simple men had its roots in the remotest past and was fed from the very sources of our civilisation. What vague conception they had of the mystical essences they had been invoking is neither here nor there. Likely enough their minds were as empty of thought as the bare flags they knelt on; or if at all any conscious thought was stirring within them, it was of the wine-shop in the *plaza* and heartening red wine and the comfortable heat of



## THE CITY MIND

the *brasero*. But their being was held in the vice-like grip of rolling sound, dazed with this parade of power, sensible of forces outside time, more real and substantial than the masses of tangible stone that had strained and tired their muscles throughout the labouring day.

In a book about Spain by a South American critic the writer commiserated with the people of the country places on the lack of distraction in their life. Their existence appeared to him as sterile and vacant as that of cattle. They had no enlightenment, no evening press, no cinematograph, no cheap reprints of Spencer and Tolstoi, no debating societies. He expressed their fate in a phrase: "They die before they have lived." "At this hour in the great cities," I reflected, "they will be reading the latest editions of the evening papers. They will know how many men have killed themselves this day and how many men have killed other men. They will have informed themselves of further details in the intimate life of royal persons and of the latest 'breeze' among the politicians in Parliament, and of the fraction of a length by which the favourite was beaten. Africa and India will have contributed their tale of calamities, and the cables will have faithfully reported the scandals of the Antipodes. We, in this fold of the hills, know nothing of all these things; but we have seen the centuries pass before us and had a glimpse of the pageant

## THE MOUNTAINS

of immortal things." Then I knew that the critic was wrong, and that perhaps it was the others who would die before they had lived.

Then came the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, with those jewelled apostrophes that transcend poetry—*Rosa Mystica, Turris eburnea, Stella matutina*—then the Elevation and the Benediction. The priest and the acolytes and the choir-boys went away down the nave with the lights. The men got up off their knees and walked stiffly out of the church. As they stumbled across the *plaza* in the darkness to the wine-shop they laughed deep-chested laughter and swore mouth-filling oaths, and above their heads burned the fiery swords of Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael.

\* \* \*

Men who rest their limbs at the close of a day's march know that there are two kinds of repose—the repose of an enchanted comfort and the repose that is merely a prolongation of fatigue. I have noticed a similar quality in the repose of ancient towns. In Italy you will find towns that are only old because they were founded two thousand years ago; age has not worn out their spirit; they seem to rest from sheer love of ease, not from paralysis. The repose of Spanish towns is different. They, too, are resting after centuries of furious life, but they are still oppressed with a

## DEAD TOWNS

painful fatigue. Their spirit is burnt up. They are asleep, but they do not dream; they are heavy with peace, but they are not serene; they have not even the decent composure of death; they are merely extinct. They have little of the romance of age. If abandoned palaces still stand in their streets, their splendour is buried beneath a coat of whitewash. For these towns seem to have forgotten their glorious past. Not only do they know no gaiety or mirth, but also they are dead even to the emotion of despair. They have become commonplace; they have grown modern without growing young. Such towns you will find all over the Peninsula, but seldom in Mallorca, for Mallorca has the most ancient sea to keep it young and fresh. But such a town you encounter in Pollensa.

You feel it even in the approach. As soon as you have climbed out of the valley of Lluch and descended through the wood that covers the steep slope of the ridge upon the other side, you enter upon a dusty stretch of *carretera* that lies in the trough of a long, hot valley. The town of Pollensa is hidden from sight behind a knoll in the valley, so that at once you pass from the silence of the fields to the silence of the streets. It appears at first to be silence, but it is that silence which is composed of minute and monotonous noises—the whirr of the spinning-wheel, the click-clack of the hand-loom, and the never-



## THE MOUNTAINS

ending plaintive song. In the *plaza* ancient men follow the sun in its daily revolution round the square, warming their bones against the sun-baked walls of Santa Maria de los Angeles, dazed and torpid, like flies at the end of autumn. They still wear the balloon-like Moorish breeches, and themselves seem to remember an age before the Revolution gave their children liberty, equality, fraternity, and trousers. Ancient women—and all the women who have ceased to be children are ancient here—sit in the shadow of their *patios*, while life slips through their fingers as evenly and swiftly as the thread which they twine from the distaff.

Juan, the waiter at the *fonda*, may be ancient or he may be youthful, for here youth itself seems to suffer the general infection of age. It is only in a special sense that he may said to be the waiter, for he waits less upon the infrequent guest than upon death and eternity. He waits with his head buried in his hands and his hands spread out upon a little marble-topped table near the window, in the sun. At his side lies a stale news-sheet, not unfittingly styled *La Ultima Hora*—life, indeed, appears here to have reached its ultimate term, and Pollensa waits impassively for the strike of the hour. He has painfully spelt out the results of last month's National Lottery; the fact that the tickets with the winning numbers are invariably dispatched to towns where there



## JUAN

are already pesetas in plenty—Bilbao and Valencia and Barcelona—does not inspire him with any sense of mismanagement in human affairs ; it is some four or five centuries now that Pollensa has seen the prizes of life pass by it.

When I gave him twenty-five centimos, which make one *real*, it could scarcely be said that he awoke to life, but his apathy relaxed somewhat. Whether he had an illusion of at last having rendered a service, or whether some spring of gratitude in him was touched by the gratuitous reward for having rendered none, I cannot tell, but he insisted on accompanying me to the port. Not that he contemplated walking there, for had he not seen Conchita disemburdened of my valise and the *carreton*, in which he proposed to accompany me, waiting at the door ? With an approving eye he watched me lift my luggage into the cart, and then took his seat beside me. At the first *venta* that we came to he had the vehicle stopped, and got out to buy cigars at five centimos apiece for himself, the driver, and me. At the next we stopped again, and this time it was to offer me *anisado dulce*. I seemed already to have received back my modest *regalito* with interest ; but on our arrival at the port, having again superintended me as I disposed of the valise, he could not part without a farewell health in aniseed brandy—which this time we drank *seco*. In Spain there is a democracy older and more humane

## THE MOUNTAINS

than that of the radical news-sheets. And so he returned to Pollensa, to fold his hands upon the table in the window and continue his long waiting upon death.

## IV

### THE PORT

PUERTO-POLLENSA is nothing more than a string of fishermen's cottages standing at the water's edge. But it is a place where content slips into the soul as easily as sleep into a child's body.

On this north-eastern side of the island the coast-line sweeps round in a deep, broad indenture, into which the land thrusts out a long, narrow arm, dividing it into two bays of unequal size. The larger bay is that of Alcudia, the smaller that of Pollensa. The port of Pollensa, however, is a port only in name. That of Alcudia has a certain importance; it is, in fact, visited by a steamer which runs twice weekly to Menorca, some forty miles away. But if Puerto-Alcudia has the commerce, Puerto-Pollensa has the beauty. The bay of Alcudia is void and formless; that of Pollensa admits just enough of the sea and no more. The sea creeps in as though enticed towards the shore, and then is folded within two embracing arms, captured, tamed, smoothed, robbed of its inhuman quality, so that if you were to paint a picture from the port, look-

## THE PORT

ing out over the bay, you would inevitably paint not a seascape, but a landscape. Instead of looking out upon a wide Sahara of sea, which brings weariness of spirit to all but those who have been bred upon the coast, you are confronted by an opposing shore, with a gentle contour of hills, and in a level hollow between them the old walled town of Alcudia, brooding on the water's edge. As you stand upon the quay, the entrance to the bay is hidden behind one of the promontories; but the bay has this advantage over the Italian lakes, which it so much resembles, that the sailing ships which steal into it under a crowd of white canvas communicate a sense of freedom and escape, and bring tidings of storms and echoes of the talk of men in distant lands, and messages of strange happenings in the far-off world.

Almost at the southern extremity of the crescent of cottages which form the port stands one which is exalted above the others by the dignity of a whitewashed façade, with four rough-hewn columns and a second story. In front of it is a kind of terrace, raised a step or two above the beach, bounded by a low wall and roofed with a *parral*, over which an awning can be thrown when the sun becomes too fierce. You might pass this cottage a hundred times without knowing it to be an inn. It is too humble to possess a sign—indeed, how should it, since it does not even possess a name? It is simply the *fonda* of Don





PUERTO-POLLENSA



## A PROFILIC FIRE

Antonio. You enter it and find yourself in a kind of wine-shop, paved with small pebbly stones, furnished with a few tables and chairs, a couple of barrels of wine, a counter, and a shelf containing numberless varieties of *anisado*, brandy, and rum. The kitchen opens out on the right and the stable on the left. By an arrangement seemingly irrational, but certainly immemorial, the fire is kept, not as you might suppose in the kitchen, but in the stable. Perhaps I should have said the parent fire, for it does not itself do the menial work of the establishment, as a normal British fire would do; its function is merely to produce offspring—infant fires which are carried away to perform their various household duties. Thus, if you want your toes warmed, the *madonna* goes into the stable and the grey mare stands aside while she detaches a living fragment and puts it into a *brasero* or circular brass dish which stands upon a little wooden platform in the wine-shop; another fragment is caught and put into a pan to warm your bed; a third is brought into the kitchen to boil your lobster, and still another to light your cigar.

But the especial glory of Don Antonio's *fonda* is upstairs. At the stairhead is a kind of landing or *patio*, with bare stone floor and bare white walls, full of that extreme peace and coolness and space which are found, I think, in no houses in the world but those which have not forgotten the

## THE PORT

tradition of the Moors. It has one small window, unobstructed by glass, closed by two wooden doors, massive and panelled like the doors of a dwarf cathedral, so that if you shut out the air you shut out the light also.

Now, I am disposed to believe that, together with the discovery of printed books, of cinematographs, of America, and other calamities of a like universal character, must be included the invention of plate-glass; for it has destroyed the essential quality of windows, which is not so much to admit light as to make pictures. The window of a modern house is seldom a real window, but merely a transparent piece of wall; it is too large; it has no proportions; it has no judgment; it does not select, but admits all things indiscriminately. It does not leave in the mind that memory of a deliberately composed view, as a perfect window should. For the memory of views seen through windows is almost as tenacious as the memory of scents, and it is one of the things that keep the mind sweet for those who live in the viewless cities. Unlike the proportions of the perfect human body, the proportions of the perfect window are reducible to a certain canon, and I can affirm that these proportions are twenty-four inches by thirty-five—I speak of a climate where the sun is no niggard—for such was the size of the window in Don Antonio's *patio*. It formed in itself a whole gal-



## THE PICTURE GALLERY

lery of pictures, and by the finest masters. Thus in the early morning you had a Turner, an apocalyptic vision of flaming sky, mountains veiled in purple mist, and a stretch of bloodstained water ; towards noon you had a Corot—his early period, when he painted brown-walled towns like Alcu-dia and the gentle slopes of tawny hills ; in the afternoon, when the outlines were expunged in the quivering, heated air and the eye was stung by sparks of light refracted from the facets of a thousand lapping waves, you had a series of im-pressions by Monet ; in the evening the lines re-sumed their precise definition, and the view as-sumed the severity and repose of the Italian primitives ; and your last picture before you closed the wooden doors of your gallery at night was a nocturne by Whistler—a deep purple sea barred by the black mass of the jetty, one dis-tant light and a violet, star-sown sky.

Now, if Don Antonio's window had been built in the plate-glass era you would not have had these easel pictures, but merely a panorama. . . .

Of food at Don Antonio's *fonda* there is God's plenty, but it is somewhat sharply restricted in respect of variety. As a matter of fact, there are but four dishes. First, *sopa*, which you may con-sider indifferently as bread damped with a thin soup, or a thin soup overlaid with damp bread. Then *tortilla*, or omelette, and a Mallorquin omelette is capable of an almost infinite number

## THE PORT

of disguises. Thus you can have *tortilla* with potatoes, with tomatoes, with peas, with garlic, with onion, and it is difficult to decide which is the best. Next, *pescado frito*—the menu does not differentiate between the various species of fish, but the range extends from the octopus-like cuttle-fish, which has been speared with a trident by torchlight during the night, to the shark-like tunny, of which there is usually one hanging up in the stable. Finally, *puchero*, a miscellaneous, collective dish, which may be regarded as an amalgamation of the three foregoing, together with anything else that is within reach at the time of cooking, the whole qualified with garlic.

The dietetic regimen is invariable, but the *madonna* is too nice in her civility to serve up a meal without first consulting your wishes. Of course, it is understood tacitly on both sides that the capacity of the larder will not stretch beyond the four above-mentioned dishes, and as likely as not the *sopa* is already on the boil. But this does not prevent the conduct of a ceremonious form of deliberation and selection, which stimulates if it does not satisfy the palate. We touch lightly upon a variety of elegant dishes, as though we had all the resources of Elagabolus to draw upon. No delicacy is too remote or extravagant to be brought within our purview. This, however, is rejected as unseasonable, that as innutritious, and the other as possibly injurious to the

## A VARIABLE MENU

liver, so that by a happy chance we find that our final choice has fallen upon *sopa*, *tortilla*, *pescado frito*, and *puchero*. Occasionally, for variety's sake, we may arrange the order thus : (1) *tortilla*, (2) *sopa*, (3) *puchero*, (4) *pescado frito* ; or, again, (1) *pescado frito*, (2) *puchero*, (3) *tortilla*, and (4) *sopa*. Indeed, I worked it out with paper and pencil one evening between the courses, and I arrived at the conclusion that there were no less than twenty-four possible permutations, but as I left before the twenty-fifth day I was unable to verify my calculations.

Now, all this, together with the *patio* upstairs and as much wine of a mild, sherry-like character as would keep a man all day on better terms with existence than he has any right to be, and as little water as would keep him only on somewhat distant terms with cleanliness, you may have for three pesetas a day—call it two and threepence. Of course, if you are such an one as cannot be easy without luxuries, you must pay for them. Thus, every night I took with my coffee two cigars and an *anisado seco*, for which I had to pay ten centimos extra. But this, of course, is optional.

\* \* \*

Nothing happens at the port except the act of living, which is also the greatest and most difficult of the arts. But as the individualism which



## THE PORT

has involved and perplexed the other arts has not yet arrived at the port, it is an act which is performed traditionally—that is to say, with ease and serenity, with a little cruelty, and with a certain primitive grace. There are no irksome utilitarian preoccupations, for the port has not invented that infinity of wants which complicates life in great cities ; the only absolute necessities are food, sun, and a little *anisado*, which are supplied without stint by the bounty of the sea, the heavens, and Don Antonio. But the lapse of time is agreeably diversified by a number of minor activities, as little burdensome and almost as unconscious as the act of breathing.

A little before six o'clock Don Antonio descends the stone staircase, opens his front door, takes a deep chestful of cool, sea-scented air—Don Antonio's chest is built upon the large, heavy, Roman model—and having surveyed the pomp in the eastern sky, expectorates towards it twice or thrice, which is a manner of salutation and approbation of the opening day. There is a certain ring of finality in the act ; it dispels indecision ; it expresses the gusto with which a man sound of wind and limb and conscience welcomes existence ; it indicates that all is well with Don Antonio's world ; it is the hearty amen of his morning orisons. As he goes off to rouse up the grey mare who has been basking all night in front of the glowing embers, a brisk jingling of little



## THE CAPITAN

bells salutes the ear, and a herd of goats is driven round the corner. Catalina, with her shining morning face, comes out of the *fonda* and proceeds to draw from their generous udders the milk for your morning coffee.

Half an hour later a gaunt figure in a dilapidated uniform emerges from a neighbouring cottage and slouches towards the inn to see if any of the little fragments of fire have by chance kept awake all night, for in the middle of March there is still a sting in the early morning air. After Don Antonio, he is the most important personage of the port. His face wears an expression of mild disgust, ennui, and fatigue, as of a man who would be administering the affairs of an empire if the effort were less exhausting, but condescends instead to regulate the customs of a petty port. The port is too insignificant for him. He is a man of wide travel and many accomplishments, for he has visited not only the neighbouring peninsula, but also the Americas and Liverpool and Cardiff, and can express himself in English with emphasis, if not with subtlety, upon the quality of intoxicating drinks, as "good rum," "bad rum," "dam bad rum." When first I saw him in the tatters of what in the early eighties must have been a captivating uniform, I was willing to believe him to be an exiled general whose ambitions had perhaps once embroiled in bloodshed some obscure, equatorial re-

## THE PORT

public, or a soldier of fortune broken in the Carlist wars, or some other like heroic soul whom fate had marked out for disaster and defeat. Perceiving me to be a foreigner and a solitary, he introduced himself to me, and said, with a trace of something authoritative in his manner :

“ *Caballero*, I am the Capitan of the *carabineros*. My command extends from the hut you can just see upon the beach to the lighthouse at the point,” and he indicated his territory with the deprecatory gesture of a decayed nobleman displaying the remnant of his ancestral demesne. “ If at any point between these extremities the *caballero* finds himself in danger, let him call for me, and I and my force will come to his assistance.” The force consisted of another veteran yet more dilapidated than himself, but I thanked him, assured him that I was happy to put myself under his protection, that I was satisfied that the force would be adequate for every emergency, and so left him, wondering what unknown perils might lurk beneath the beguiling aspect of the sleepy port.

About seven o'clock the fishing-boats arrive, and the Capitan slouches to the end of the jetty to watch the disembarkation of the tunny fish. He regards them with a doubtful and suspicious eye, as though perhaps they might not be innocent tunny fish after all, for his profession has taught him that things are not always what they

## GULL-FIGHTING

seem. Having satisfied himself, however, that neither British tobacco, nor French linen, nor German hardware are secreted in their capacious insides, he strolls back to the terrace in front of the *fonda* to smoke a cigar and enjoy the growing warmth of the sun, with the just satisfaction of a man who has done his duty by his king and country.

The chief diversion of the day consists in a kind of cock-fighting with seagulls. Whenever one of the two sailing ships which constitute the sole shipping of the port arrives from Cette or Marseilles or Genoa, its miscellaneous cargo is sure to include a number of these luckless birds, known in Mallorquin as *virats*. Apparently they are witless creatures that have ventured upon a voyage too great for their strength, and, being ignorant of the deceitfulness of the heart of man and his strange relish of painful sports, they have let themselves be enticed on board by the lure of food. Immediately on their disembarkation they are hurried off to the cock-pit—the terrace in front of the *fonda*—and there, seemingly too fatigued to fly, they run along the ground with a grotesque hurry, seeking the oblivion of dark corners among the confusion of sails and barrels. They are quickly jerked by the tail out of their asylum, and planted down beak to beak in the sunlight. They view one another without animosity, however, and in order to kindle the spark



## THE PORT

of battle it is necessary to ruffle the equanimity of their temper. With shouts of “*Olé! Olé!*” the urchins of the port hustle them against each other until they are provoked to a considerable heat of irritation. Mistaking the true cause of their mutual aggression, they join their discordant human cries to the general clamour and commence a spirited onslaught. As soon as one of the combatants, however, secures a too predominant advantage over the other, it is slapped on the head and body until it loosens its hold. Then follows a brief breathing space and an adjustment of ruffled feathers until the signal is given for the next round to begin. So they are kept sparring steadily, though with flagging energy, until noon calls the spectators to adjourn for the midday *comida*.

While I am taking my coffee in the sun after lunch there appears to be a feeling that I am in need of distraction. The *virats* are dragged from their uneasy siesta and set fighting again by beautiful boys with eyelashes of a sweeping length which I had formerly believed existed only in the imagination of the artists who design the fashion-plates for ladies' journals. The battle rages languidly throughout the afternoon. Dust dims the gay sheen of their feathers and flies, with their sure instinct for the approach of death, settle fearlessly on their wings. I felt a melancholy satisfaction to know that the hour of their release



## A LINGERING DEATH

was drawing near. But not yet. The impatient boys grow tired as soon as they cease to respond to the plainest provocations, and abandon them to their petticoated brothers. But though the gulls have no more fight left in them, they have still gracelessness enough to pinch the tender fingers of the infants. The indignant Capitans ties up their beaks with string ; another string is fastened to their leg, and the children drag them about as an English child would drag a toy engine, put them on their heads with outstretched wings and laugh to see the struggles of the fantastic living headgear, embrace them in all but fatal caresses. It is not until the third or fourth day of their captivity that their life wears out. They lie on the parapet in the evening with their breasts against the stone, the strong wings that used to flash in the sun limp and broken, the eyes that used to survey the gleaming sapphire plain of the Mediterranean dull and unseeing. Occasionally they lift a filmy eyelid and look out where their fellows are wheeling in their airy kingdom over the sea ; but even this effort seems to become more and more difficult until the film falls for the last time and they soar out into whatever sublime ether receives the spirits of tortured *virats*, over a sea unharried by men with food in their hands and guile in their hearts.

Meanwhile the simple business of the port goes forward—so far as there can be said to be any

## THE PORT

going forward in a manner of life which is almost wholly traditional and immemorial. The men dry their nets on the beach or sit in the shade of their houses stitching the large lateen sails of their *faluchas*. The women croon an endless lullaby over the little brown-fleshed animals in their arms ; the children plait the long grasses of the marsh into a fibrous rope, rubbing them into strands with a swift, dexterous motion of the palms. The stillness of the sleepy afternoon is only broken by the splashing of the waves, which rise and fall a hundred paces from the beach, as though too languid to reach the shore, and the still more monotonous and languid chanting of ancient melodies, which seem to express all the fruitless pain of labour and all the fruitless despair of love. The sun wheels round the bay until Alcudia, which in the morning stood out a black silhouette against the light, burns and flashes across the water like a jewel. A sense of timelessness is evoked, wholly different from the burdensome sense of age which is the atmosphere of ancient cities. There is scarcely a sight or a sound here that attaches you to our century ; the very notion of centuries becomes indistinct and meaningless. The occupations of the men and the simple instruments of their labour are unchanged since the days of their fathers and the old time before them ; they seem to lose their trivial character and to become symbolical of the proper

## EVENING AT THE FONDA

life of man before it was corrupted by a multitude of desires. It is the life which our race has lived on the shores of the Mediterranean since the race began.

It was Keats who said that the setting sun always put him to rights, and I have read that a man who can watch the sun set every day has no business to complain of life. But here, if it were protracted into a long twilight, the sunset would be a tragic affair. Happily the dark leaps upon the bay with a sudden vigour, and blots out Alcudia and the hills and the figures on the beach, and hushes at last the unending melancholy chant.

The doors of the *fonda* are shut ; the *brasero* is replenished with fire ; a smoky oil-lamp is lit and hung up on the wall. The small wine-shop is filled with sailors and fishermen, cards are brought out, and coffee and *anisado* are served in frugal quantities. Two of the men have guitars ; the rest play cards to a low, heart-breaking accompaniment. Presently a few women come in, like nuns dressed from head to foot in black, and one or two girls with quiet, gleaming eyes. They seat themselves on benches round the wall and talk in whispers. The boys, tired out with *virat*-fighting, sit with the men and watch the guitar-players sleepily.

After a time, a youth with a bright red sash round his waist and a bright yellow scarf round



## THE PORT

his neck gets up and beckons to a girl who is sitting near the door. Her arms are bare from the elbow, a shawl hangs from her shoulders, the back of her head is covered by a coloured *pañuelo*, and she wears a skirt that reaches to her ankles, though she is a mere child of twelve or thirteen years. Her sister pushes back her hair under the handkerchief, gives her chin a playful upward tilt, spins her round and gently pushes her out into the middle of the room. For a moment or two she stands limp and motionless, her slight figure contracted into a shy, shrinking attitude. Then, at the first vibrating note of the guitar, she starts into life, throws out her bare arms on either side, and with a graceful swaying motion of the body moves a few paces backwards and forwards. The movements of the dance are not very clearly articulated—perhaps the rough cobbles of the floor prevent any special delicacy of footwork. At first the dancers pace slowly to and fro along parallel lines, without advancing or receding. Then they go forward, meet one another, and cross over into opposite corners. The dance and the music quicken. The girl, with a light, backward kick, makes a sudden turn. The youth spins round even more sharply. They cross over from side to side more and more frequently, circling round one another in a series of abrupt revolutions as they pass. The dance takes possession of the whole body, the arms and hands and head



## THE DANCE

as well as the feet. The rhythm of the boy's movements is almost lost in their energy; he ducks his head under his arm; his arms revolve like windmill sails; he leaps tiger-like towards the girl, and then, suddenly recovering himself, slips past without touching her. Some of the men have brought wooden spoons from the kitchen, which they use as castanets, beating an energetic rhythmic accompaniment. Suddenly the music stops, the youth drops upon one knee, his head against the girl's breast, looking up into her face. For an instant she stands surprised, as it were, in a graceful poise, motionless, but with the flame of the dance still quivering in her body, and then walks gravely back to her seat by the door. Not a word of applause; not a *bravo*, not an *olé*. The guitars strike up again, a sailor leads out a dark-skinned girl of eighteen, and the dance repeats itself, but with a less childish grace on the part of the girl, with a more calculated pose, and surer and more decisive steps.

The women in black who were sitting round the wall appeared to be verging upon old age, as old age is counted in Mediterranean countries. As a matter of fact, I suppose they were not much over thirty; but the sun had traced a network of lines round their eyes, and labour and child-bearing had driven the youth out of their figure. Throughout the evening they had sat so silent and unnoticed that I was surprised when a

## THE PORT

man took one of them by the hand and attempted to lead her out to the dance. She refused, however—refused in that emphatic, vehement, and categorical manner in which Spaniards refuse when they intend to consent. Finally, hungering to dance, she allowed herself to be pulled by the man and pushed by her friends into the arena. I supposed the dance would prove a stiff, mechanical affair; but the music seemed to loosen her limbs, and the fierce rattle of the castanets to put a fire into her blood. As she danced, the long winter, which is woman's portion round the Mediterranean, vanished, and she recaptured for a few moments the springtime of her lost youth. It was not a less graceful, but a more careful, dance than that of the girls. Her body did not abandon itself, as theirs did, to the ecstasy of the moment, but seemed to be waiting upon the mind and moving to a former, half-remembered measure. Then, as suddenly as the music stopped, the spell was broken, the recaptured grace deserted her, and as she wrapped the black shawl round her again the burden of years almost visibly leapt upon her back.

And now the Capitan, who had all this time been engaged in gloomily gnawing a grizzled moustache, suddenly awoke from his frustrate dreams. I had supposed that he had not the power to cast aside either his dignity or his despair, even if he had the wish, but to my surprise

## THE CAPITAN BESTIRS HIMSELF

he stepped out into the middle of the room and began to dance with a startling animation. His figures were involved and peculiar to himself. He disdained the gentle swaying motion of the youths. His movements had something unforeseen about them, a military abruptness of attack and retreat. He appeared to be jointed like a marionette and his limbs to be manipulated by numberless secret wires. He pawed the air and brandished his legs like a playful colt ; he gave a series of lightning kicks, frontwards, sideways, and backwards, in the manner of a French boxer. As he gyrated, his tatters fluttered madly in the air and described a frenzied shadow-dance on the wall, so that the whole room began to flicker like a cinematograph, and the eye was bewildered as with the antics of a bedevilled scarecrow. It was the grand climax. No one had the hardihood to challenge comparison with the *carabinero*.

The hour was nearly midnight. In the early part of the evening the boys had followed the movements of the dancers with the patient gaze of animals ; now their dark, humid eyes were closed and their heads sank on to their chests.

“ *Ahora, señores, el ultimo !* ” exclaimed one of the guitar-players, a black-faced mariner with gleaming teeth. He struck a few sonorous phrases upon the guitar, and then, with a howl like that of a wolf in pain, he burst into a weird and vehement song. His head was thrown back,



## THE PORT

the muscles swelled in his throat, which was bare to the chest, and his eyes had that look of sightless intelligence which comes to men who are occupied with an interior vision. The *coplas* were strepitous, monotonous, drawn out into an infinite wail. There was the same weariness in them, the same maddening, stupefying rhythm as in the litanies of the Church. Their deliberateness was almost unbearable, and provoked a desire to cry out for cessation and relief; but as they gradually overpowered the senses the pain passed into a kind of ecstasy, although the uneasy ecstasy of a drug. It was a music which rent the heart. But, like all traditional music, it seemed not so much to express a present emotion as to be preoccupied with a far-off, dimly remembered delight. The eager, frenzied reiteration was like an effort to keep imprisoned the passion which had been brought back with difficulty from some distant region of the mind and was always on the point of escaping. He sang in Mallorquin, and I knew no more of the song than that it was of love and the soul and a woman whose beauty was more than that of the Queen of Heaven. Then a change came over his singing. The harsh, strident tones became infinitely tender, so that it was like a voice coming from a great distance. The song that had raged and stormed like flames in a wind now dropped to a whisper, and when it ceased altogether we scarcely knew it.



## BON NIT TENGA

There was a silent pause after he had finished. Then someone opened the door, and the cool night air drove in. The drowsy boys raised their heavy lashes and looked about them dreamily. The women and the girls pulled their shawls closely over their heads. A few last glasses of *anisado* were drunk, and then, each with a "*Bon nit tenga*" to Don Antonio, the men and the women went away to their several homes along the beach.

## V

### THE PLAIN

IF their consent were asked, I think all men would choose to live among mountains or by the sea. The life of hill-towns and ports is fed by exhaustless reservoirs of air and sea, which are at once tranquillising and invigorating. Mountaineers may be a sad people—frequently they are—but they rarely have the torpor of men who are indifferent. Their very melancholy is a vital thing; it is as poignant as their outbursts of joy; it is a hint of their sensitiveness to enduring things. In hill countries Nature is more emotional. Every day is dramatic with sunset and sunrise, with surprising interludes of light in a far valley and sudden gatherings of gloom. If the landscape can depress the spirit with melancholy, it can also touch it with moods of unaccountable exaltation. Men who live in ports are notoriously happy—although, perhaps, theirs is the insecure happiness of men who have danger for their bed-fellow. The quarrelsome noise and strident music that fill a port at night have the defiance of a kind of triumph over the clamouring sea. The aspect of

## UNREPOSEFUL LANDSCAPE

ports is always cheerful. They are the windows through which a land looks out upon the world and into which blow the freshening winds from all the four quarters. They can never grow stagnant, for the going out of every ship is a visible adventure.

But in the plains, and especially in the southern plains, the atmosphere is charged with a certain oppressiveness and lethargy. The plain of Mallorca extends from the foot of the northern *sierra* to the low range of hills which fringe the southern coast, covering almost the whole extent of the island. The landscape, as in all Mediterranean countries, has little real sense of repose. It suggests immense age in a way that a northern landscape never does. The plain of Mallorca has worn the heart out of countless generations, and it is stamped too clearly with the mark of their painful labour. It has responded to their labour, but stubbornly ; its fertility is coaxed, as it were, by a ceaseless, watchful attentiveness. It is kept alive by being continually fed with little draughts of water which never seem lavish enough to quench its eternal thirst. In this land, where there are no rivers, but only a few winter torrents, water has acquired a preciousness like that of wine. It is handled in small quantities and with frugality ; it is carried about in a two-armed earthenware jar, which is the direct descendant of the Roman amphora, though time has coar-

## THE PLAIN

sened the graceful flow of the lines. It is searched for deep in the earth, drawn up out of the *norias*, the wells which the Moors dug to irrigate the soil. Almost every little holding has its circular stone platform, where the blindfolded mule goes round and round, yoked to the long branch or wooden bar which turns the wheel. The water spills out of the earthenware buckets, which overturn as they reach the top of the wheel, and trickles through a network of *acequias*, or little stone channels, in and out among the fields of parched wheat and beans.

The landscape has not that generous verdure which we in the North habitually associate with an agricultural country. Its foundation is a fierce red, softened by a kind of silvery haze—the dusty sheen of the olives. The olive is everywhere, and everywhere it has the appearance of immemorial age. One supposes that once it must have been young, but always it is writhing in agonised shapes, with often a suggestion of a kind of striding movement, as though it were trying to escape from the torture of the Mediterranean noon. Its vitality is amazing; through the most decayed and shattered trunks it draws up a sap which by some miracle nourishes a beautiful plumage of silver leaves. It has followed man as he pushed step by step westward along the coasts of Europe and Africa. It is the very foundation of his comfort and his wealth. It ranks with wine



## THE SYMBOLIC OLIVE

as one of those simple luxuries which, having become necessities, mark the definite arrival at a certain stage upwards from the insecure savage life. Its fruit is always on the table whatever else may be lacking, for at the humblest *fonda* they would never dream of setting food before you without a dish of cleansing olives. It recalls the antiquity of the Mediterranean civilisation, and might well stand for the symbol of it—just as the palm is the symbol of Islam, branchless, severe, inflexible.

The plain is dominated by the olive, but its colour is varied by other growths: the carob tree, whose rich dark green serves as a foil to the more delicate grey of the olive; the almond, which turns the plain in spring into a flowering orchard; the fig, with its creeping, lateral branches which seem to love to hug the ground; the pale, unsightly, fleshy cactus, like some exotic nightmare growth, sucking strange nutriment out of the stony soil. For a moment in March the whole plain smiles beneath the sea of almond blossoms; but when this moment of gaiety is past the iron hand of summer grips it in a vice as hard as the frost of winter, and its expression once more becomes arid, painful, exhausted. A silence settles upon it, and if any noises disturb it they have a note of pain and weariness—the wailing of Moorish songs with which the boys keeping the herds answer one

## THE PLAIN

another from distant fields, the creaking of a wooden plough as it grates through the stubborn earth, the groaning of a cart crawling along the endless white roads, which break the heart of man and beast more than the sharp rise of a hill.

Though the landscape bears the mark of human industry as plainly as a city, there is rarely a trace of a human habitation to be seen. It seems as if some traditional fear of the open country still clung to the people, as if they had not yet forgotten the sudden raids of the revengeful Moors, the warning beacon on the watch-towers, the hurried arming of the men, the flight of the old and the weak into the hills. Although their life is spent in the fields, they are still townsmen. Every morning shortly after sunrise the migration sets out from the town to the country, and every evening at sunset it flows back again to the town. All day the men and women bend over the burning furrows, the children play beneath the shade of the olives, the dogs sleep beside the pile of household goods, the mule revolves round the *norja*. In the evening men, women, and children crowd into the long, narrow carts, and the whole army of labourers hurry back to shelter themselves against the night behind the friendly walls of the town.

\*

\*

\*

## DEFENCELESS DEFENCES

Alcudia and Pollensa belong to the plain, although their ports bring them into touch with the sea. When you approach it, you find that Alcudia does not lie upon the water's edge, as it appears to do when seen from the other side of the bay. It is placed almost midway on the rocky isthmus of low-lying land that joins the mainland with the chain of hills running out into the sea. In the days of the Moors and the Corsairs proximity to the sea meant danger, but Alcudia was founded in an earlier age when the *pax Romana* ruled over the waters of the western Mediterranean. Its natural defencelessness was converted into strength by a double circuit of massive fortifications.

Approaching it from the seaward side, I found my way barred by ruinous but still formidable defences, first a ditch and an outer rampart, then a wide moat and the ponderous main wall of the city. I searched about until I found a breach, through which I crept, stooping very low. This is not the usual way in which the Alcuadians enter their city, but coming up from the seashore from Puerto Pollensa I missed the main gateway on the La Puebla road. It was perhaps the way by which the Corsairs entered that night in A.D. 1558, when Dragut sacked the city. Stones and debris were scattered about just as they had fallen. If appearances were to be believed, the assault had been made but a few hours ago, and



## THE PLAIN

I was following upon the heels of the invading army. I found myself among narrow streets, and I was amazed at their silence and desertion, until I remembered that, of course, the city had been sacked and its inhabitants put to the sword. A few survivors, however, old women and children for the most part, thrust their heads fearfully out of doorways as I passed, but drew them in again when I turned to look at them. The flies, however, had not capitulated. They still held the town in great force, as they had held it through all the vicissitudes of its fate—under Barbarossa, under Don Jaime the Conquistador, under the Moors, under the Vandals, under the Romans. Doubtless they had ridden into the Roman camp which formed the nucleus of the city on the chargers of the centurions, had assisted at its foundation, had watched the building of the amphitheatre and the construction of the walls. They had observed its prosperity and its decline with equal indifference; in the course of ages they had become habituated to conquest and reconquest, and had learned to view the revolutions of man in their proper historical perspective. On this present afternoon they were chiefly concentrated in the café, a garrison in the heart of the city where the remnant of the manhood of Alcudia still held out. The café was not small, but it was crowded to the utmost limit of its capacity, and smoke filled those interstices of space which were



## DOMINOES

not occupied by flies and men. The men were drinking coffee with an air of depression, the flies were sipping *anisado* with gusto and animation. Both in their different ways were apparently making the best of things, but the philosophy of the flies was clearly of a more optimistic complexion. Doubtless they found the café at least as cheerful as the harems of the Moors, and certainly more liberally provided with *anisado* than the formal palaces of the Renaissance, which still stand in the neglected streets.

Moreover, they were able to pass the time without having recourse to dominoes, a diversion which I suspect generates much of the depression of Alcudia. It is played with something more than the earnestness of an international chess match. No gambit requires more deliberation than the selection of the piece with which to open the game. After examining all the pieces in his hand, as though he were reading his fate in the number of the pips, the Alcludian will at last push forward a double five, withdraw it, begin a fresh scrutiny of his pieces, and finally, with the air of a man who has made an irrevocable resolution, push it forward again. The next player has only one piece which contains the corresponding five spots, but does he play it out recklessly? Not at all. The game calls for reserve and gravity. He handles every other piece in turn, notes their difference from the piece upon the table, lays

## THE PLAIN

them reluctantly aside, and then, when the adversary has been kept long enough in suspense, beguiled into hopes that he would fail to play, the cunning fellow slides it forward with a smile. At the end of half or three-quarters of an hour the players' hands are almost empty, and the strain becomes intense. Even if a player has but one piece in his hand, and that piece of the wrong number, he does not lightly pass his turn, but smokes the third of a cigarette before he reluctantly shakes his head. The game ended, the pieces are turned back upwards, shuffled, dealt out again, and a new game begun. So the long afternoon wears on, with only an interval when the diligence starts for La Puebla and the players walk to the glass door of the café to see it pass.

There is little in Alcudia to detain the visitor from entering the diligence and driving away. There are the two gateways, as prim as if built out of a child's toy bricks, which watch over the roads leading to the port and La Puebla; there are Renaissance palaces in the back streets, very pathetic beneath a smiling coat of whitewash; there was once an ancient Gothic church before it fell into the hands of the restorers; there is the café; and there are the ponderous walls, still guarding this city, which has long since been rifled of its wealth and beauty.

\* \* \*

## THE WAITING PATIO

The plain is full of country towns—La Puebla, Muro, Santa Margarita, Petra, Sineu, Campos, Villafrancha. Too often, however, they do not live—they mortify. They are in the midst of the country, but the country does not refresh them. The high road does not lead *to* them, as it does to towns that are happy and occupied, but merely *through* them, not pausing to let you make their acquaintance, but hurrying on into the country again, plainly apologetic for bringing you to a place which cannot divert and may easily depress you. The *carretera* narrows and is flanked by houses, but it does not become a street—it never loses its dust or its sun or its silence. The houses are neither new nor old, neither mean nor affluent; they have the uniform expression of middle age and middle class. They are shuttered, as though full of mourning. The doorway is wide and round-arched; the door is always open, and discloses a *patio*—bare, stone-flagged, cool and dark like a well. Round the walls stands an astonishing array of cane-bottomed chairs, awaiting a company which never arrives—or rather, it arrives but twice or thrice in a lifetime, on those occasions which men instinctively feel to be momentous: birth, marriage, and death. Certainly the company has no part in determining these events, but the occasion demands its presence, and its presence demands food; it seats itself upon the chairs; it partakes of wine and sweet-



## THE PLAIN

meats; it is silently communicative of condolence or congratulation; and it departs until the next crisis of nature calls it together again. In the long intervals between the summonses the *patio* is commonly tenantless. If for any reason you wish to summon the inmates, you enter and call out, "*Ave Maria!*" As likely as not the name of the *madonna* is Maria; it is not her, however, that you are invoking, but the Blessed Virgin. If you are impatient, you become more emphatic, and exclaim, "*Purissima!*" At length, from some distant quarter of the house will come the response, "*Sin pecado concebida*"—born without sin. These doctrinal preliminaries over, it is possible to discuss worldly business.

The silence of the streets is scarcely interrupted by the chanting of the children in the nuns' school—passively chanting the lists of the four cardinal virtues and the seven deadly sins. The town seems to lack the vitality to commit a deadly sin or even a cardinal virtue. One supposes that they learn the names of these things as they learn the names of distant countries with their capitals and principal rivers, and have as vague a notion of the connotation of the words. But the black-clothed *cura* who paces up and down in the narrow shade peers over his breviary into the *patios*, as though he suspected vice to be lurking within their gloom. The town is surely guilty of no crime but perhaps a little republicanism—for the main industry of



## APATHY

Mallorca is shoemaking, and although the connection between making boots and revolutions is obscure, it is notorious that all cobblers are certainly radicals and probably republicans. In the *plaza*, therefore, you will find a Centro Republicano where vague revolutions are planned nightly, and also a Centro Catolico where they are condemned.

In the *plaza* there is more dust, more silence, and more sun; but chiefly sun—sun that is pitiless, immoderate, inquisitorial, without modulation, without gaiety, sun of the Mediterranean noon. For in the *plaza* it is always noon—noon of day or noon of night. It is never visited by those suggestive half-lights which divest objects of their reality and provoke the heart to indefinable imaginings and desires. The town is always definite and real and prosaic; it imagines nothing and desires nothing except ease from labour. The nights here are more obscure and opaque than anywhere else; they do not whisper to the soul disturbing things—there would be none to listen or to understand if they did; they are mute; they are made not for loving, but for sleep. For though there is marrying and giving in marriage in the town of the plain, one doubts whether there is love. Certainly there are no places for making it. At the town's end the *carretera* stretches onward in a blank, straight level, without a hedgerow, without a

## THE PLAIN

sheltering wood—with only a few solitary palms, austere and forbidding, like sentinels of Africa, standing aloof from the earth and negotiating with the skies. A little further on, the funereal plumes of the cypresses wave over the walls of the cemetery—an unweeded garden, a *camposanto* without sanctity and without resurrection, a town of the dead, but where sleep and silence and abandonment are scarcely more final and complete than in the town of the living.

Such a town was La Puebla, to which I walked one evening from Alcutia. I entered the *plaza* just as the angelus bell was ringing, and the men were standing outside the Centro Catolico with their hats off, and outside the Centro Republicano with their hats on. It is the sort of town one would expect peasants to build when they herd together. It has no proper civic sense, no dignity, no variety, no proportions. It would appear that a town must be lived in, and not merely slept in, before it can acquire any intimate, social character. The streets are long, narrow thoroughfares, each like the main street of a village, driven through rectangular blocks of buildings. The town is full of sewing machines; it is the terminus of the railway from Palma, and has the appearance of being merely a depot for the collection and expedition of the produce of the country-side. It was not unnatural, therefore, that when I halted in the *plaza* in the evening,

## PRIMERA COMUNIÓN

the first question I was asked should be, *Que vende usted*—What have you got to sell? And truly, unless a man has something to sell, he is misusing his time in visiting La Puebla.

But there is one day in the spring of every year when for some hours the busy sewing machines are silent, and La Puebla forgets its preoccupation of buying and selling and ceases to talk of *duros* and *pesetas*. It is the day when all the towns of Southern Europe are gladdened by a brief rejuvenescence, when they are visited by the vigour of the spring and feel the sap of young human life pushing up within them. It is the day of the *Primera Comunión*.

I was out in the streets a little after seven, when I saw a vision of the Pied Piper of Hamelin. The piper, however, was not pied, but clad from head to foot in sober black; and although he did not pipe, the little black-bound book which he carried in his hand had magic enough in it to compel a horde of children to follow at his heels. He stalked through the streets until he came to the church, and there the black portal swallowed up both him and his victims, like Hamelin's mountain. I followed, and found the children clustered round a priest in the midst of the nave. He was asking them a number of questions of a metaphysical nature, to each of which they replied, with all the shrill affirmation of their little souls and bodies, *Si, Padre! Si, Padre!* Indeed, so



## THE PLAIN

eager were they to assent to truth that when, in the course of his harangue, the priest slipped in a merely rhetorical question—for he was something of an orator—their voices still continued to exclaim vehemently, *Si, Padre! Si, Padre!* until an admonitory frown informed them that in this case the correct reply was in the negative. After they had blithely assented to all manner of unspeakable verities—and also accidentally to one or two heresies—the priest went up to the altar and began to sing Mass. The black-clothed figure, however, whom they had followed through the streets, stood up at the western end of the church and proceeded to read aloud out of his little book. In some perplexity as to which of the two competing functions had the better claim to their attention, they settled the doubt by attending to neither.

When Mass was said, the priest came down from the altar and stood upon the steps leading into the nave. Two little boys took their stand on either side of him, holding lighted candles as tall as themselves. Two others, kneeling in front of him, held up a long white cloth unsteadily on a level with the tips of their noses. The priest, a large bulk of a man, with a full-fleshed face like that of a weary pierrot, proceeded to administer the Communion languidly. The boys came first, in batches of four or six at a time, with hands folded meekly upon their breasts and a look of



## SUBMISSION

bewilderment in their eyes. Kneeling down, they took the cloth between their finger and thumb, thrust their chins over the edge, and opened their mouths like young sparrows waiting to be fed. As soon as the wafer rested on their protruding tongues their arms were seized by anxious nuns, and, without a moment for recollection or spiritual digestion, they were snatched away and pushed and hustled down a narrow lane of parents and spectators with piety expressed in their folded hands and annoyance written manifestly on their faces.

As soon as the boys had thus been all securely folded into the Church it was the turn of the girls—odd little figures of old women, with black silk hoods over their shoulders and black mantillas on their heads. But there were some dressed all in white, half hidden beneath their bridal veils, with their long hair hanging unplaited at the back and crowned with a garland of wild flowers—little tragic queens who seemed half to guess that this was but the first submission of a life which for them was to be but a sequence of submissions. There was something sinister in the contrast between the freshness of their bodies and the ancient building with its pompous relics of dead centuries, between the sunlit *plaza* outside, where their brothers and sisters were heedlessly playing *pelota* against the sacred walls, and the funeral gloom within, where the Church was

## THE PLAIN

already twisting its mighty roots about their fearful hearts. She appeared to be unjust and rapacious. Was not life inexorable enough that she must forestall the inevitable processes of nature? Let them play a little longer in the sun before the shadows come!

Outside in the sun a long table was spread with sugared buns. After the two hours' service the children came pelting out of the church and clustered round it eagerly. Too eagerly, indeed, for the *cura*, who took a long, willowy stick like a fishing-rod and beat them on the head to make them keep a proper distance. Certainly it could not be said that the Church showed herself a particularly fond mother on the day on which she gathered her children within her arms. Perhaps she was giving them a foretaste of her discipline, on the principle of that general in the Thirty Years War who used to let off a cannon or two against the recruits coming to enlist under his banner—the beggars had got to taste powder sooner or later, and the sooner the better! But as soon as their impatience was curbed, the children were mollified with the sugared buns. Not that they needed mollification, for they seemed to perceive no unfitness in a welcome which might appear to the sentimental outsider sour and impolitic. To them it was merely an incident, neither more nor less irrational than any other, in that amazing episode of buffeting, ear-boxing,



THE PRIMERA COMUNIÓN





## THE REQUIEM

abusing, caressing, and embracing, which constitutes childhood in a country where the adults are children also.

At Muro, the next town that I came to, the church again was the centre of life. This time it was a requiem. Outside, the light was white and blinding, but within it was night. In the centre of the nave stood a catafalque, covered with a heavy velvet pall. Children were lighting candles for the repose of the soul of the dead, and the shrieking of matches upon the stone flags almost drowned the murmur of the priests; for the children were extracting what amusement they could out of the service by blowing out the candles as soon as they were lit for the pleasure of lighting them again. A few ancient men and women were sitting about on benches and stools, watching the rehearsal of their own obsequies with a lugubrious fascination.

There are churches which inspire devotion, and there are churches to which you have to bring your own devotion with you; the churches of the plain are of the latter sort. They were built for the most part in the seventeenth century, when religion—at all events, in southern countries—was pompous and rhetorical rather than devout. The heavy gilt of the altars, their swelling, bombastic curves, their well-nourished cherubs, suggest the mundane style of Louis-Quatorze furniture. One breathes

## THE PLAIN

the close atmosphere of a royal boudoir. But in the churches of these dead towns there is always some pious business going forward. Without a theatre, without political meetings, without a police-court, without even a Cine, they find their one unfailing entertainment in the Church. She dramatises life for them, putting the common incidents of birth and death in a large setting, staging the seasons of life and the seasons of the year with a certain grandiose pomp. Every phrase and every gesture has crystallised into a convention, but her dramas are still more enthralling than those of the Cine, because they are made out of the raw stuff of life and are not merely the animated pictures of a picture. She raises misfortune to the level of tragedy, and presents the routine of existence as a spectacle to which the whole universe is attentive.

\* \* \*

The road from Muro to Artá sweeps round in a wide curve of twenty miles, though drawing near to the sea never coming within sight of it. But the land feels its influence. Near the coast the southern plain breaks out into stony, wind-swept moors, the trees diminish, the olives and almonds disappear. As the *carretera* approaches Artá it rises into the southern range of hills. As I climbed the slope I overtook a few peasants walking to Capdepera. After the inevitable catechism

## WINTER IN JEST

had been asked and answered I would have pressed on, for it was growing late. But the peasants quickened their step to keep pace ; for there is an influence in empty spaces of country at night which does not inspire anything so definite as fear, but which keeps men together. We walked on, not speaking, but nevertheless very sensible of a kind of communion with one another, each one being surrounded and protected by a certain convoy of human companionship. We passed through Artá, the Ardjan of the Moors, with its castle on the hill and its church whose arched buttresses form an arcade of strong light and shadow in the sun, and four miles further on came at last to Capdepera, the easternmost town of the island, quite close to the sea.

In Mallorca, winter has no terrors for anyone except the Mallorquin, who crouches from an imaginary cold over the imaginary heat of a *brasero*. Autumn joins hands with spring and winter is elbowed out. Occasionally, however, in the early months of the year, the winter seems to resent its exclusion from the dance of the seasons and sets to work to scatter discomfort over the island. It rains in the plain and snows on the mountains, and blows great guns all round the coast. But it isn't really serious. It can't keep up the farce for more than three days, and on the morning of the fourth the sun bursts out laughing, and you shoulder your pack and take the



## THE PLAIN

road rejoicing. While it lasts the discomfort is extreme, for Mallorca is fortified against the sun, but not against the rain. As soon as the skies grow grey its serenity collapses ; it becomes disconsolate ; it has no resources, and there is nothing for it but to play dominoes in the café until the weeping fit is over.

One of these blustering, belated energies of winter overtook me at Capdepera, but unfortunately I took it seriously and did not wait until the fourth morning. At the *fonda* the rain lashed in through unglazed windows, and confused the operations of bathing and dressing. Cheered by the anticipation of hot coffee, I greeted the landlord with a show of heartiness which vanished when he told me that the only morning beverage which he supplied was cold water, or, if it were insisted upon, *vino negro*. Nothing warming was to be had nearer than the café in the *plaza*, a large, bare room as dreary as the *fonda*, but drier. Here I was served by the Emperor Trajan, though now he calls himself Miguel ; but I knew it was he because I had seen his bust in the British Museum and I recognised the features at once—they are large, solemn, and rather foolish.

I had parted with my valise and the seven thick, square volumes at La Puebla. It is idle to expect to find literature at a Mallorquin *fonda*. At Capdepera there was an Apostolic Indulgence addressed to Don Francisco Mir, in which “ our



## DAMPED SPIRITS

most holy Father Pope Leo XIII, who felicitously governs the Church, in consideration of an alms of fifty centimos of a peseta, granted to Don Francisco permission to eat wholesome meats during Lent and on certain other days of vigilance and abstinence, and to enjoy the same indulgence when he was on his travels in foreign lands where Lenten fare was not obtainable, always provided that he, Don Francisco, thereby avoided giving cause for scandal." There was also an elementary reading-book for Mallorquin children which consisted of moral maxims, such as *los niños desobedientes gustan al diablo*—disobedient children please the devil. The information was not cheering, so I returned to play dominoes at the café, where I spent the first and second day. The third day was Palm Sunday, and hoping to find some animation in the church, I went out into the rain to search for it. I found a dispirited congregation languidly waving damp palms in the air, while three unharmonious priests were engaged in a triangular duel of chanting and responses. It was then that I despaired of Capdepera, and resolved not to wait for the fourth morning to break. I was compelled, however, to wait until the very verge of dawn, for the *diligencia* does not leave Capdepera until two hours after midnight. There appears to be no plain necessity for so late—or early—a departure, unless it be for the convenience of theatre-goers,

## THE PLAIN

for Capdepera boasts a theatre as well as a Cine. Trajan—I mean Miguel—informed me that there was to be a performance that evening, and if I cared to divert myself there until the *diligencia* left, he would be pleased to accompany me.

At eight o'clock we were seated in the first row of the balcony benches. Miguel provided a bag of pea-nuts, and I a packet of cigarettes at fifteen a penny. The theatre was about as large as a good-sized railway waiting-room and rather less ornate. It possessed an orchestra, however, which consisted of a drum and cymbals supported by a bassoon and violin. The violinist had the misfortune to be blind, but he was attended by a little boy who poked him in the ribs as soon as he saw the bassoon-player's cheeks begin to swell, thus securing that all the instruments should at least start fairly level. The curtain rose upon an impassioned love scene between the hero and heroine. At first I was a little puzzled at hearing two voices speaking simultaneously, although the lips of one only of the actors appeared to move. The second voice, however, turned out to be that of the prompter, whose function was not so much to prompt as to dictate. It was a little disconcerting until you became accustomed to it and made up your mind which monologue to listen to. The prompter had the more powerful and mellifluous voice, but he refrained from encroaching upon the prerogative of the actors and generously

## THE ART OF PROMPTING

suppressed any emotion in rendering his part. He recited in a firm, breathless, but unexpressive monotone :—

“ *Gracias a Dios* I have at last in my possession the desired license Now approaches the longed for day when I may at last embrace thee and seal our love with the irrefragable seal of matrimony *Ay de mi !* how much I have suffered I who have never trembled before anybody tremble before thee O *amada mia* I feel something which I cannot express—and this something without a name is the most delicious transport of paradise I become pale——” And just as the prompter was becoming pale the hero was arriving at the point of producing the desired license. He took up the colourless monologue, punctuated it, emphasised it with energetic action, made it vibrate with passion, so that, whereas the prompter had left us almost unmoved, the hero carried us off on a flood of emotion. It was the touch of a great artist, and the feat was the more striking when one considered that at the same time that he was stirring the audience, he was also picking up the thread of the drama half a dozen sentences ahead. This moving scene, however, was soon interrupted by the villain, who announced with a cheerful leer that the reservists had just been called out to serve in the campaign against the Riffs and that the hero was due to sail the next day for Africa.



## THE PLAIN

In the next act the heroine was lachrymose and disconsolate. She was being consoled by her father, but she refused to be comforted—as, indeed, she might very well have been if only she had recognised as clearly as the audience did that the voice of her father was really that of her lover, who had only partially concealed his costume and his identity beneath a long cloak and a white beard. For, in spite of the imposing list of dramatis personæ printed on the programme, the whole burden of the performance fell upon the prompter, assisted only by the hero, the heroine, and the villain. At first I was at a loss to understand the reason of the long monologues, which appeared neither to advance the action nor to amuse the audience ; but Miguel explained to me that they were necessary in order to give the actors time to transform themselves into the other characters.

In the third act the villain appeared with a more brutal and cheerful leer than before, and broke the news to Dolores that a Riff bullet had found a lodgment in her lover's heart. She swooned beneath the shock. We, however, felt no surprise, for the prompter had already informed us of the event a minute and a half before, and our attention was now taken up with listening to a rapid précis of the hero's last words from the same source of early information. Naturally, however, the villain lied, for in the next act



## THE TRAGEDIANS

the hero reappeared paler than ever, but with half a leg shot off—at least, the part below the knee, which was doubled up behind, was understood to be missing. The psychology of the heroine was complex. She did not argue that a lover with half a leg was better than none at all but took the pessimistic view that the proper *dénouement* was for both to commit suicide, which, in defiance of every canon of good taste, they proceeded to do in full view of the audience. They suspended themselves from a tree, and though the drag of their clothes at the shoulders suggested a hook at the back, they both put out their tongues and simulated hanging most unpleasantly. The villain went off into the wings declaring that he would shoot himself—there hardly seemed to be an adequate reason, but tragedy was in the air. We distinctly heard a report behind the scenes, but when the curtain fell upon the discovery of the unfortunate lovers by a *guardia civil*, his face wore a leer which it was impossible not to recognise.

It was a lugubrious little play, and if the motives of the characters were occasionally obscure, the spectators were none the less sensibly affected. So much so that it was necessary to console them with a *zarzuela*, in which the heroine danced so prettily that gaiety was soon restored. It was past midnight before we were back in the café, attempting to dry our steaming clothes over an

## THE PLAIN

almost lifeless *brasero*, and to drive the chill out of our bodies with coffee and *anisado*. At last the jingling of bells announced that it was two o'clock and the diligence had arrived.

“Diligences carry passengers and mails,” says the guide-book, “but they are not used by the aristocracy.” It is very true. They are used chiefly by substantial women carrying the produce of their gardens to market, commercial travellers, and strolling players. On climbing up into the conveyance, I found that the four corner seats were occupied by the prompter, the hero, the villain, and Dolores. The villain was nursing a bulging yellow silk handkerchief, about the size of a Christmas pudding, which contained the night's takings, all in copper. He was also smoking a villainous contraband cigar. The diligence seemed very small and very full when we started, but it grew smaller and fuller as we went on. When it was quite full we stopped again at Artá, and two large countrywomen came in out of the darkness and the rain. Inside also it was perfectly dark, except for the glow of the villain's cigar, and therefore it must have been by accident rather than by design that the larger of the countrywomen chose my knees to sit upon. She was in no way inconvenienced, however, and, resting her head upon my shoulder, she was soon breathing heavily in a deep sleep. The shutters of the windows were closed, but the rain drove

## THE "BLACK HOLE"

in through the slanting laths of wood and put out the villain's cigar. He struck a match to re-light it. In the momentary flare I caught a glimpse of a very dishevelled Dolores. The colour had faded from her lips and was trickling down her chin. Sleep came easily to the rest of the company, but passed me over. I attempted to find comfort by reminding myself that this was the true atmosphere of the "good old times." But the atmosphere was too heavy with garlic and stale cigar smoke to be romantic. The hours lengthened out into the timelessness of a nightmare. The dawn broke at last and revealed a ghastly spectacle—a locomotory Black Hole of Calcutta, crawling over the rain-sodden landscape, compact with a damp mass of humanity twisted into those gross shapes which the body assumes when it escapes from the control of the waking consciousness. About five o'clock I saw through the shutters with unmeasured relief the tall white tower of the church of Manacor rising up out of the plain.





**MENORCA**



## VI

### THE LOST JEWEL

AN April noon in the Mediterranean—and the steely seas and sullen skies of Britain.

For two hours we had been coasting along the southern shore of Menorca—that lost limb of the British Empire. For all that the eye could tell, it might have been one of the outer Hebrides. Half a mile away a low barrier of brown rock rose abruptly out of the water; away behind stretched a dreary expanse of land, seemingly for the most part as flat as a billiard table. A couple of bald eminences, not attaining the dignity of mountains, protruded in the midst of it.

Slipping through the channel at the south-west corner, between the mainland and the islet of Aire, we encountered the full blast of the north wind which sweeps over the island and beats its straggling foliage towards the south. A steep bastion of red cliff strikes out eastward, sheltering the entrance to the finest harbour of the Mediterranean, *esta preciosa joya*, as the Spaniards call it—this precious jewel, thrice set in the imperial crown of Britain and thrice lost.

## THE LOST JEWEL

Beyond the heights of La Mola, from which the sleeping cannon look down upon the mouth of the harbour, the northern shore of the estuary shelves down to the water's edge in grassy slopes, giving it a kind of kinship with the Scottish loch. Half-way up the narrow, winding arm of the sea, upon a jutting angle of the northern shore, stands Georgetown—for though it has got the brand-new Spanish name of Villacarlos, Georgetown it was and Georgetown it will remain, until its square, squalid, Georgian houses are thrown down into the sea. Almost opposite the town lies the little island which the British tars with grim facetiousness christened Bloody Island—it was there that the Sawbones of the old wooden navy practised his rough-and-ready surgery.

Half a mile beyond, a bend of the harbour reveals the town of Mahon—a long line of pink and white buildings stretching along the quay-side, and a crowd of grey and white houses huddled together on the crown of the cliff above. But the eye that has grown familiar with the face of Mediterranean cities detects a strangeness in its aspect. The houses have not the imposing Roman magnitude; their colour is not the *tostado* of Spain—the warm brown of stone burnished by centuries of the meridional sun, but the disconcerting whiteness of whitewash; the pitch of the roofs suggests a more northern latitude; the windows are frankly and grotesquely British. An





PUERTO MAHON



## IMPERIAL ARCHITECTURE

execrably paved street climbs up the steep ascent from the quay, and you find yourself, not in a Mediterranean city, with its air of languor and recollection of forgotten pomp, but in a prim, mean, prosaic, eighteenth-century English seaport. The domination of Romans, Vandals, Byzantines, Moors, Spaniards, and French has left scarcely a trace, but, fresh as a coin from the mint, Mahon bears the impress of the seventy years of British occupation. It presents the amazing phenomenon of a fragment of Cornwall midway between Africa and Spain. "We have forgotten it," I was told when I spoke to the people of the time when their fathers were subjects of the English king; but the town has not forgotten. The very names of the streets—George Street, Hanover Street—are a perpetual reminder. The houses were clearly built by a race that had not yet learned to fear the rigour of the Mediterranean sun. Moors and Spaniards, who build to exclude rather than to admit the light, space their windows economically in a generous extension of wall. In Mahon they are planted largely and boldly, in rows of two and three, fitted with sashes and divided by laths of white-painted wood into six square panes—just as they are in the Hackney Road. The balcony—that one solace of women in southern lands—is almost as little known as in Devonport or Falmouth. The Church of Santa Maria, it is true, has the proper Mediter-

## THE LOST JEWEL

ranean quality—the imposing simplicity which comes from sheer unrelieved expanse of wall; but its façade is made ridiculous by the intrusion of four sash windows, which give it something of the air of an eighteenth-century meeting-house.

Beneath the disfigurement and dilapidation of almost every town that remembers the dominion of Rome, there is rarely absent a hint of grandeur and suggestion of Imperial power. The English are the one Imperial race who never learned to build imperially. The plan of our architecture, like that of our empire, has been a little haphazard, informal, conceived without imagination, uninflamed by a grandiose idea. It has never found means to translate the adventuring spirit of our race. Especially here in the Mediterranean, where the eye instinctively adopts a larger standard, the impression is pitifully meagre and commonplace. The best we have given to the town is that air of propriety and simple decorum, which perhaps we acquired in those days when our fortunes were linked with those of Holland.

So clearly has the little town preserved the traditions of the time when the Blakeney, the Anstruthers, and the Townshends held their petty court here, bickered with the ecclesiastical authorities and ostentatiously attended the Protestant worship in the Church of San José, that it is not in the least surprising to come across a



## THE MEMORY OF WORDS

tablet by the roadside setting forth in Georgian Latin the virtues of Governor Kane and the "honorabilis Henricus Edwardus Fox." Less British-sounding names would appear foreign and out of place. When you see the urchins of the port playing at knuckle-bones in the gutter and hear them call out "*knur-kle*," it is not the English word that at first sounds strangely, but the unfamiliar accent. Many are the English words embedded in the Menorquin dialect. Because the English sailor called for his liquor in a bottle or a mug, the fisherman of Mahon still orders his *botil* or *moch* of wine. *Mitjamen*, the name for the *guardia marina*, does not present a very English character in print, but it is merely "midshipman" disguised. And a curious reminder of the periods both of the English and the French occupation exists in the idiomatic expression for a handful of people, *cuatre jans y un boy*—four Jeans and a boy.

\* \* \*

Perhaps the illusion was suggested by the water-colour drawings of British redcoats, drawn up in files like lead soldiers, which I had seen in the *Ateneo* at Mahon; but certainly when I left the houses behind, the country no less than the town seemed to wear the same familiar aspect of England. Not the England which makes pictures

## THE LOST JEWEL

in one's dreams when one has been long in exile—the essential England of deep pastures, drowsy lanes, hedgerows, and village greens—but that other older, half alien, Celtic England of the west. Here were the stony, wind-swept wastes of Cornwall, the wide landscapes ruled by long lines of crumbling stone wall, the stunted trees cowering before the sea-wet gale. Nearer to the southern coast the land becomes more bleak and barren, the soil thinner, the grass scantier, until the walls enclose only fields of solid rock, and the fields bear no other harvest than stones, stacked thickly together like sheaves. When the last white-washed farm is left behind, the narrow cart-road loses itself in wandering paths which lead down to the sea through a labyrinth of ravines. If you choose the right one, you come upon a cove of clear emerald water, above which rise a hundred feet and more of sheer golden rock, and suddenly—for although the landscape has been leading you backwards through the centuries, the transition is still all too abrupt—you find yourself in the very cradle of our race, the rock-city of Calas Covas.

In the dim morning of the world this place was populous with men, though who can even conjecture whence they came, or what was their likeness or their speech? Hunters of beasts and also the hunted, they hewed out places of refuge in the face of the cliff. The wall of rock presents the

## THE ROCK-CITY

appearance of a honeycomb of caves—some mere dens, like the lairs of wild beasts, with barely space enough for a man and a woman to crouch together for shelter from the driving storms, others spacious chambers with alcoves and columns of living rock and rude windows opening upon the sea. If one of the primeval cave-dwellers could return in his body to this cove, he could scarcely tell that ten years had passed since last the rocks echoed to his voice. He would find all the landmarks of the village undisturbed. He would go past the familiar boulder that has detached itself from the rock ; he would swing himself up the cliff by the well-known footholds ; he would know the cave that used to be his own ; he would find the print of his axe as fresh and sharp as on the day when he smoothed the lintel of the door ; he would look out through the narrow square doorway upon the same picture of emerald water and golden rock. For though since the days when he lived here Nineveh and Babylon and Carthage have risen and perished, and the face of the earth has been changed beyond all knowledge, this is a place which time has forgotten to remould. It stands as it did in the twilight of the world's dawn.

I had been thinking so long of far-off things that I had scarcely noticed that the sun had slid down into the sea, and that ragged, purple clouds, edged with fire, were streaming up out of



## THE LOST JEWEL

the horizon. The cheerful noises of the day, which from time to time come faintly echoing down the ravine from the farms beyond, had ceased; the less cheerful but still comfortable noises of the night, the guttural chorus of the frogs, the plaintive music of the nightingales, never reach this desolate coast. The surge of the sea was intermittent, and every wave that slipped back down the crumbling beach left a gap of silence, as though a multitude of men had stopped their breath. The cords which in all but the most savage places of the world attach a man to his own age were relaxed, and I felt myself to stand at the furthest limit of the vista of time, the vanishing point where history becomes involved in the very catastrophes of the material structure of the earth. That subtle human influence which places where men have long inhabited most certainly absorb, distilled and became palpable like dew. The sense of unease which always hangs about habitations abandoned by men was the more disquieting here because it was impossible to shape any picture of the manner of life their inhabitants had lived. They lived too near the beginnings of time and they lived too near the brute. The dread of this tenantless city pursued me up the ravines and among the barren fields. It was a comfort to see the white road beneath the stars, stretching like a rescuing arm from the towns of living men down into this haunted abyss. But it



## OUR LADY OF MONTE TORO

was not until I smelt the smell of rank tobacco and drank the sour red wine in the café of the village of San Clemente that I felt the reassuring contact of familiar things and gladly surrendered myself again to the fetters, so often irksome, of this present time and civilisation.

\* \* \*

At the summit of the miniature mountain, almost in the centre of the island, stands a little whitewashed church, to which pilgrims climb barefooted to beg our Lady of Monte Toro to intercede for them. And being healed of their infirmities, they hang their rings and earrings, their rosaries and crosses and precious stones, about the image of the Mother and her Son and go down the hill rejoicing.

Standing upon the little terrace outside the church, you look down upon what seems not to be a real island, but only a page out of an atlas, on which a coloured island is outlined against a faint blue sea—so dominating is the standpoint and so miniature the scale. At the westernmost extremity is the white dot which marks Ciudadela, and at the easternmost rise the heights above Mahon. To the north is the almost land-locked harbour of Fornells, no bigger than a pool of rain-water when the blue sky is reflected in it. The indented coast-line forms the boundary of a

## THE LOST JEWEL

chart rather than of a landscape. The view shows itself in a mosaic of greens and browns—the dark, irregular masses of wild olives, the light green squares and triangles of stony wheat-fields, and the liver-coloured patches of naked soil. Here and there a town shines like a drift of newly fallen snow. Sprinkled among the fields are dots of pink and white, the painted farmsteads which have in some way never acquired a local character, but belong to the same order of architecture as that of the doll's house.

So small, so bare, so insignificant in aspect, it is difficult to believe that this toy island ever had any part in the stormy life of Europe. It is scarcely credible that the tumult of the nations should have made itself heard above the surge of its seas and the singing of its winds. Yet it has in its turn received the mark of every civilisation and suffered violence at the hands of every people that has struggled for the supremacy of the Mediterranean. Like all the other islands of the archipelago it has been a shuttlecock in the contest between East and West, tossed from the Carthaginians to the Romans, from the Romans to the Moors, and from the Moors to the Spaniards. But, unlike the others, it found no rest even when the power of Spain had finally beaten off the last of the marauding Corsairs. For the game of Europe versus Asia being finally decided in favour of Europe, the new game of the Balance

## THE ISLE OF UNREST

of Power began among the European nations, and Menorca was dropped like an ounce weight, now on one side, now on the other side of the scale. England, casually piecing together an empire out of the pickings of the moribund territories of Spain, coveted that precious jewel the harbour of Mahon. Thrice her squadrons bore down upon the island, upon which she set such a price that once, in her exasperation at losing it, she did a thing that astonished Europe. She shot poor Admiral Byng. *Dans ce pays-ci il est bon de tuer de temps en temps un amiral pour encourager les autres*, sneered Voltaire. France, scarcely less covetous, for a short spell of the seven uneasy years between 1756 and 1763 made herself mistress of the isle. Conquered and reconquered, Menorca had to wait till the nineteenth century had dawned before she was rid of the last of her alien masters.

But even with the knowledge that all this record of contention is most indisputably written down in many truthful histories, still, as one looks down from the height of Monte Toro upon the island sequestered among its lonely seas, it costs an effort to believe that it has lived in the very vortex of human trouble. The lazy mules wind their way through the lanes beneath their piled-up burdens; the oxen drag the plough painfully through the stony fields—the plough that does not cut the soil like a knife, but stabs it with a

## THE LOST JEWEL

heavy iron spear-head, the very same that the Romans used. All around there is a slumbrous noise of insect life, and from a distance comes the fluting of nightingales. The island is at last asleep, and now its two thousand years of tumult are no more than an unhappy, scarcely remembered dream.



## VII

### SEPULCHRES AND WHITEWASH

MENORCA is cut in two by a *carretera* which runs for thirty straight, dusty miles between Mahon and Ciudadela. Governor Kane first constructed it, and the country people still call it the *carretera d'en Kane*, although they pronounce the governor's name as Canny. Twice a day there is consternation and confusion all along the route as the motor omnibus thunders by in a cloud of dust. I alighted at Mercadal, the half-way stopping-place, where there is a *correspondencia* with the port of Fornells in the north and the village of San Cristobal in the south. The *correspondencia* turned out to be a canvas-hooded coster's cart, the shafts of which supported an effete and disconsolate donkey. The *mayoral*, for such is the high-sounding title of the driver of the most humble diligence, told me to mount, and made a courteous pretence of making room for me. Certainly there was little enough room to make, for besides the driver and myself and my luggage, the cart was encumbered with loaves, vegetables, milk-pails, plough-shares, and mail-bags. The

## SEPULCHRES AND WHITEWASH

*mayoral*, who also combined the offices of postman, baker, and general carrier, occupied a cushioned seat, while I found an insecure and painful couch among the loaves. As soon as we began to move—and between rest and motion there was scarcely a perceptible difference—the driver commenced to deliver a monologue to the donkey, which he cursed, coaxed, threatened, and satirised for three-quarters of an hour without a pause. At the end of that time he turned to me and inquired how many republicans there were in my country. I was unable to give him the figure, whereupon he drew a weekly newspaper out of the mail-bag and fell to reading it. It consisted of only a single sheet, two-thirds of which were occupied by a black-edged announcement informing the world at large that the inconsolable spouse of a deceased islander, his sons, sons-in-law, cousins, nephews, aunts, and the rest of his relations (absent and present) requested the attendance of his friends at his obsequies, for which service the Bishops of Barcelona, Palma, and Ciudadela had granted indulgences in the usual form. He put the paper away and began to study the post cards addressed to the various inhabitants of San Cristobal, which manifestly he found more diverting and informative.

Having thus whiled away the afternoon in traversing the four miles from Mercadal to San Cristobal, we at last arrived at our journey's end.

## THE ENTHUSIASTS

“ *Caballero*, my house is your house ! ” exclaimed the *mayoral*, who never failed in those extravagant, unmeaning courtesies of Spain, indicating with a pompous gesture the post-office, bakery, and general carrier’s depot. I thanked him, and informed him that my apartments at the *Fonda de la Estrella* were equally at his disposal ; and so we parted with mutual endearments, each knowing that we should see the other no more.

My object in coming to San Cristobal was to visit the prehistoric remains in which the southern part of the island abounds—the *talayots*, *taulas*, and sepulchral caves. The information volunteered by the coffee-drinkers at the Inn of the Star was uncertain and conflicting. Some said they were enchanted, some elaborated details of the construction of a colossal monument by a single man in a single night ; the most prudent referred me to the doctor and the chemist. It was not immediately obvious why San Cristobal should require the services both of a doctor and a chemist, for its air is the very elixir of life, and there appears to be no good reason why its inhabitants are not immortal. I discovered, however, that they had not so much a cure of the bodies of the living as of the spirits of the dead. They were the guardians of the primeval necropolis. They lived not in the present age, but in some epoch of the distant past. They were contemporaries of Pharaoh ; their religion was occult



## SEPULCHRES AND WHITEWASH

and pre-Christian ; their politics a kind of jingo imperialism, but the empire whose affairs they had at heart was the vanished empire of Rome. The chemist described the doctor to me as *un medico en dilirio*. But the delirium of the chemist himself was so tremendous that the imagination was unable to conceive the divine fury of the doctor. The chemist was a Catalonian, and to see him was to understand why Catalonia is the driving wheel of Spain. His gestures were like a drama, and his voice the brass of the orchestra. To hear him tell of the *fiesta* of St. John was to see the stallions proudly prancing down the streets of San Cristobal and to choke with the dust and the heat and be deafened with the clangour of the band.

The night was all too short for these enthusiasts. At the break of dawn—or, to be precise, just as the watchman was praising God and announcing that it was four o'clock and cloudy—the chemist was calling for me to be up and away to the sepulchral caves of Biniatzem. At the grey of dawn sepulchral graves have no allurements ; I felt no enthusiasm at the prospect of disturbing the slumbers of the dead, and resented their intrusion upon mine. But the chemist was not to be denied. Already he was tearing strident music out of the heart of a guitar and mixing his praises of profane love with the devout invocations of the *sereno*. When at length I descended





THE TALAYOT OF BINICODRELL



## A MYSTERIOUS LANDSCAPE

into the café, he, who had breakfasted at dead of night, allowed me only to wash out the dregs of sleep with a draught of cold water, and seizing me by the arm he hurried me through the streets, whose white walls were faintly rosy with the dawn, and out into the open country. "Open" country, however, it was in no proper sense of the word. It was a tortuous, furtive, ancient country, a country scarred with clefts which gaped like the open wounds of the earth's crust, of immemorial roads worn like the very grooves of time into the eternal rock. It was a country that had suffered petrification, grey with stone—stone of the fields, stone of the interminable walls, stone of the gaunt, secretive pillars. In this unearthly light of the sinking moon and the rising sun it was full of lurking mysteries. The landscape seemed uneasy with the spirits of the dead, and the breezes whispered secrets of abominable things.

In the midst of a field we came upon a giant column, surrounded by a broken circle, which had once looked down upon the terrible daybreak rites of a dark-minded people. The faint fragment of a Roman inscription which was decipherable upon it inspired the same kind of shock with which one reads the signature of a modern tourist upon a Gothic tomb; for among monuments of such antiquity the Romans were merely modern interlopers like ourselves. We were in a country in which the perspective of history was indefi-

## SEPULCHRES AND WHITEWASH

nately prolonged, so that one's fixed conceptions of the relations of epochs were bewildered and unsettled. The Moorish invasion seemed a bizarre impertinence, the Romans only modern imperialists; even the Carthaginian traders drew closer to our own times than to the days with which these stones were contemporary.

As we penetrated further into the heart of this mysterious land the excitement of the chemist became supreme. He wrestled with imponderable stones; he flung himself upon the ground and scratched with his fingers like a terrier, feverish to tear out the secrets of the soil. But there was a method in his madness, for when he lit upon a fragment of massive pottery he hunted about until he had nosed out many other fragments and skilfully pieced together a complete Roman tile. At every step we were treading upon the shards of buried civilisations. Here were bits of pottery glazed with the black, metallic lustre of Etruria, a green fragment of a Greek lucerna, the arm and lip of a Roman amphora, the smooth, white pebbles which the Balearic slingers drove into the temples of the Roman legionaries. At last we reached the rock necropolis of Biniatzen—low caves cut into the face of the ravine, with small square doorways, with squat, forbidding columns, with shallow graves dug out of the rocky floor. In one cave, more difficult of access than the rest, the chemist burrowed among the



## SEPULCHRAL SPORTS

débris and brought to light a very charnel-houseful of human bones. He sprang upon them with delight, fitted thigh-bones into knee-sockets and worked the joints like a clockwork toy. He fitted prehistoric men together as a child fits puzzles, and in his delirium attributed to them the proportion of giants. His fever was contagious, and I found myself gathering together skulls which he affirmed were prehistoric and wrapping them up in a copy of the *Daily Telegraph*—too exhilarated with this new sport of plunging into the abyss of time to heed the irony of it.

The streets were flashing with the hot sun of the forenoon when we returned to San Cristobal, panting and fatigued after this delirious scamper through the ages. “*Somos dos intrepidos!*” the chemist exclaimed with a glow of satisfaction as he wiped his streaming forehead—we were two intrepid ones! And then, as if his brain were not already sufficiently ablaze with I know not what impossible enthusiasms and imaginings, he gulped down the fire and sugar and aniseed that they sell at five centimos a glass, before he dashed off to compound drugs for the neglected sick.

\* \* \*

The *carretera d'en Kane* terminates in the ancient city of Ciudadela, lying snugly at the end of a narrow, rocky creek which winds into the land

## SEPULCHRES AND WHITEWASH

like a river. It is the seat of the bishopric and the home of an absentee nobility. Although its bishopric is a comparatively modern creation, it has something of the pompous pose which cathedral cities invariably acquire. It has escaped the English transformation, and preserves its Spanish character better than any other town in the island. The houses which flank its arcaded streets are more ample and dignified. It takes the air in spacious malls, set with alleys of plane trees and flanked with stone benches, and in wide *plazas* surrounded by the disconsolate eighteenth-century palaces whose noble masters are away spending their rents in Madrid—if, indeed, it be really possible for any rent to be squeezed out of the stony fields of Menorca. On the banks of the little creek sit swarthy fishermen mending their nets, which they twist round toes as brown as the net itself, and singing untuneful Moorish melodies with all the vigour of their iron lungs. From the cafés in the harbour comes the busy music of guitars, and in the air is the saucy laughter of girls—for Menorca wears a cheerless aspect but a cheerful heart.

Although the English moved the seat of government to Mahon, Ciudadela still imitates in a petty way the gaiety of capitals. In addition to the Cine there is a Casino Republicano, where I found *la simpatica y artistica Sorianita*, a flashing little figure in scarlet and emerald, who darted about



CIUDADELA





## FANDANGO!

the stage like a goldfish in a bowl and made fierce grimaces at the citizens. They were enraptured. They showered caramels upon her, and in token of their homage unloosed a cageful of doves, which unfortunately singed themselves in the jets of acetylene gas and ended their bright career in the dust of the pit. The storm of applause, however, never faltered, and *La Sorianita*, bending over the footlights and spreading her arms out interrogatively, exclaimed, “*Que que-reis?*” “*Fandango! fandango!*” came the answering shout as from a single throat. Accordingly the music struck up again, and the little figure in scarlet and emerald beat out maddening thunder from the boards with her high-heeled shoes, until the citizens could contain themselves no longer and flung their *sombreros* in a black shower upon the sympathetic artist.

Many a despondent city of the peninsula would do well to follow the brave example of Ciudadela. It is unquestionably in a decline. It has been deprived of its pride of place as capital of the island. Its nobles have deserted it. It has shrunk somewhat, so that its wide spaces are a little too large for it. It has suffered all the blows of evil fortune which induce the deadly torpor of the *pueblo gris*. But it has a gallant heart. Instead of spending itself in unavailing regrets, it goes nightly to the Casino Republicano to watch *la simpatica*

## SEPULCHRES AND WHITEWASH

*Sorianita*, and forgets its lapsed glories in the merry noise of her indefatigable heels.

\* \* \*

“*Il y a une femme plus jolie qu’une jolie femme, une femme laide qui plaît,*” and perhaps the same is true of islands. Menorca has none of the rich beauty of the South. One would say that in some primeval convulsion of the earth it had got shuffled out of its proper place in an archipelago of the Atlantic and happened upon the Mediterranean by accident. Its features are harsh, severe, and monotonous. But like a woman who has no natural beauty it has cultivated that friendly charm, not apparent in a passing glance, which often goes deeper and lasts longer than superficial beauty. It is so poor that it has never been able to make itself beautiful with churches and palaces as its wealthier sisters in the Mediterranean have done, and so it has had to make itself beautiful with whitewash. Or rather, it has done a thing still rarer—it has made whitewash itself beautiful. It has discovered its æsthetic value. It has lifted it up from its lowly place in the hierarchy of beautiful textures and used it to provoke the challenge of marble. The little towns of Mercadal, San Cristobal, and Alayor—names which ring in the ear like bells—are snow-white from the tip of their steeples to the floor of their cellars, and when the sun at noon stands high

## THE LIGHT OF FAERY

above them, their streets become luminous rivers through which vibrating waves of light roll visibly. It is not the feverish light of the Mediterranean, but a crystalline light that has something of the quality of water—clear, cool, and baptismal. The whitewashed walls seem to act in the manner of a prism, breaking up the glare of noon—whose terrible melancholy all sensitive souls know too well—into the tenderest lilac and rose. The surface of the houses becomes translucent, like the glaze of a rare Nankin vase. And in this well of light the men and women walk as if transfigured, with shining countenances which cannot help but smile.

But there is one effect of light which, I think, happens nowhere else but in the whitewashed streets of Mercadal, San Cristobal, and Alayor. It comes in those fugitive moments when you cannot say whether it is day or night. It is not sunlight and it is not moonlight; it is at once both and neither. Overhead the sky darkens to a sullen purple, and towards the horizon, which is no further away than the end of the street, it pales into jade and amber. The moon is faint as a wisp of cloud, but the sky is so thick with stars that it stretches over the roofs like a celestial embroidery work. The light that fills the street is pure silver, but the light that strikes on the walls is a dove's sheen of rose and mauve and opal. A man who has seen it has seen for once and all the



## SEPULCHRES AND WHITEWASH

light of faery. It has magic in it too, for it brings the children trooping into the streets, and fills their bodies with an ecstatic gaiety which the mere sun can never awaken. They dance like elves in a moonlit glade—but like very Spanish elves; they stamp with their feet and twist their arms and bodies into serpentine curves, and pucker their mouths into amazing grimaces. Heaven knows where they have learnt it all, for surely *La Sorianita* never flaunted her scarlet and emerald in the virgin streets of San Cristobal. It is the magic of the jewelled light which stirs ancestral motions in their blood.

Menorca is barren of flowers, but very fruitful in children. Here they appear to be lighter-limbed and lighter-hearted than the children of Spain or than the children of Mallorca even. There they fall too readily into the habits of grown men and women, and their faces show a sad wisdom, as though their hearts had told them truth too soon. But the children who are drawn from their beds by this enchanted light and fill the streets with a rejoicing noise, know only that divine folly which is the wisdom the world will never learn. Very beautiful they are with their eyes of Moors, their sweeping, mane-like hair, and flashing, copper-coloured legs. But if you wish to see the most beautiful of them all you must go to the *fonda* in the Calle Ancha at Alayor. You will know her by the way in which the broad, pink



## THE ELF-CHILD

ribbons gather the hair from her forehead and let it fall in massy loops against her oval face, and by the long lashes which rest on her cheeks, and by the innocent coquetry of the poise of her chin. She will stand with her arms folded on the table while you dine and watch you out of half-closed eyes. And when she has taken away the bad, sweet wine they make in Alayor and set before you a glass of the driest wine of Jerez, she will look at you with all the earnestness of ten Aprils, and say in the archaic Menorquin speech, *Escolti! yo li feré una pregunte*—listen, and I will ask you a question!

But if you want to know what that question is, you must go yourself to Alayor—and I know no better reason for going.

\* \* \*

The sun had set an hour ago when the *Monte Toro* slipped down between the low shores of Puerto Mahon and underneath the guns of the battery on La Mola. The north wind was driving up a bank of angry cloud across the fading sky. The encroaching night engulfed the island, with all the memories of the undecipherable past locked up in its secretive stones. Obscured were the innumerable perplexed landscapes which are always on the point of communicating the mysteries that seem to trouble them, but always become inscrutable again in the very moment of disclosure.

## SEPULCHRES AND WHITEWASH

The shore receded until it became a black bar upon the horizon, over which smouldered the last sullen fires of the twilight. A group of Spanish soldiers were standing round a lantern at the stern, clapping their hands like children and singing couplets in praise of the island which Admiral Byng was shot for losing.

But, after all, was it not a delinquency which might perhaps have been forgiven? . . .

**IBIZA**





## VIII

### THE AMOURS OF SANTA EULALIA

ON a Saturday afternoon towards the end of May in front of the *fonda* of the only town in the island of Ibiza, which is therefore necessarily the capital, stood waiting a *burrico* and *carretoncito*, or in plain English, a little donkey and a little donkey-cart. In this humble conveyance I purposed to make the tour of the island. Bombita was a very fragile, Lilliputian donkey, with a tender, mouse-like skin and contemplative eyes. It would have been less surprising to have observed him meekly following in the procession of toy animals about to enter a Noah's ark than to see him standing there in the sunlight, seriously proposing to draw the cart, the luggage, and myself through the plain and over the distant hills. But I reflected that if his needle-like legs were diminutive, a foreseeing providence had adapted the scale of the island to their faltering steps.

Travelling in a donkey-cart is the most tranquillising thing in life—at all events, if the donkey is as well-mannered as Bombita was. He was careful always to walk upon the right side of the

## THE AMOURS OF SANTA EULALIA

road, he crossed over to the left on those rare occasions when he wished to take precedence of another donkey, and without any pressure of the reins he stopped at every place where they sell *anisado*. Indeed, he took upon himself all the direction and responsibilities of the journey, leaving his driver infinite peace for dreams.

On a hot afternoon at the bottom of a donkey-cart dreams have none of their stormy midnight energy. You lie on your back, just a little above the earth, and not so very far from the lazy skies that slide past above your head. If but to think is to be full of sorrow, this is a cure for all the busy mischief of the mind; for thought itself dissolves like the useless fleeces of cloud in the measureless sky. The mind becomes a mirror which reflects nothing but the blue emptiness overhead. And in this middle state of consciousness you are just aware of people in other trances and other donkey-carts drifting up and down the smooth high-road, which in the droning afternoon becomes a kind of travelling dormitory. Vacant faces look down upon you out of the void and wish you laconic *tardes*. Observe, we do not wish each other "good" or any other variety of afternoons, but simply afternoons, afternoons absolute, afternoons upon the *carretera*, slothful, heart-easing, eternal. For if there really be any place where it is always afternoon, it is upon the *carreteras* of Mediterranean Spain, and though

## AN IBIZAN OASIS

there is no lotus to eat, there is *anisado* to drink, which is just as cheap and perhaps as effective.

We travelled at first along the circle of the bay, then through a fertile plain, beneath the dripping blossoms of *arboles de paraíso*. The low hills closed in upon us; we turned to the east and passed through meagre wheat-fields, the soil growing redder and more barren as we approached the coast. Towards evening Bombita came to a standstill, and I found that we had halted in a kind of square formed by the meeting of four roads. There was a fountain in the middle of it, and at the end of a tree-shaded avenue I caught a glimpse of the sea, only a stone's throw away. Round the square stood a few detached buildings, some of them like Arab fortresses, white, flat-roofed, and dominated by a single palm. After travelling in the sun over the dry red soil, the coolness and the greenness of the place gave Santa Eulalia the illusion of a desert oasis. Bombita had, of course, stopped in front of the *fonda*, and already the *fondista* was searching me over the edge of the cart with the glassy stare of eyes that have almost lost the power of sight. As he said nothing I began to infer that he had also lost the faculty of speech, but he comprehended everything, unharnessed Bombita, and then brought me a glass of *anisado*. I was about to drink it when I recollected that all the exemplary travellers I had read about always postponed the satisfaction of their own needs



## THE AMOURS OF SANTA EULALIA

until they had cared for the wants of their beast. When I set out on my journey I had no notion as to what sort of food Bombita would consider most palatable, but I trusted to pick up information by the way. I inquired, therefore, if there were any thistles to be had. It seemed so unappetising a dish to end the day with that I half suspected the tradition must be derived from some Bestiarium or curious compilation of medieval lore, and probably was as near to the truth as the fiction of the shrieking mandrake. They told me that Bombita would prefer the fruit of the algarroba tree, which certainly seemed a more rational choice and confirmed the opinion I had already formed of his intelligence.

I had previously ordered my supper of Concepcion, the *fondista's* daughter, a sad-eyed girl, dressed all in black, whom I recognised at once, for I had seen her many times in Bellini's pictures of the Madonna. She sat in the doorway knitting, her face growing sadder as the twilight deepened into dark. She radiated an almost holy calm, so that it was impossible to allude to the absence of any preparation for supper. Experience, moreover, had taught me that in Spain it is useless to attempt to expedite matters. *Paciencia* and *mañana* are the watchwords, and to-night it seemed as if the morrow would literally arrive sooner than the meal. But towards eleven o'clock





RETURNING FROM MASS, SANTA EULALIA



## A SMILING CHURCH

the *fondista* reappeared. He was not dumb, after all, for he spoke two words, and those, to my astonishment, in English : “ Mister—breakfast.” I looked into his face steadily, but his glassy eyes were as humourless as those of an owl.

When I went to Mass the next morning I was aware of an atmosphere which I had never felt in a church before. The church was not dark, as most Spanish churches are, but illuminated by a happy light which streamed in through the open door. It was clean and bare, whitewashed within and without. The gilt *retablo* was as gaudy as a merry-go-round at a fair. The saints smiled down indulgently, as though they knew all that was in the hearts of men and women, and were not displeased. The Madonna was the prettiest doll that you could ever wish to give to a child. She had dull golden hair and black eyelashes which shaded demure but alluring eyes. Her dress was of silvery silk, embroidered with gold, and she wore many dainty frills of exquisite lace. The church was so crowded that there was scarcely room for the dogs to lie down comfortably. The right half of the nave where the women sat was as gay as a garden in June. Almost all the women had June faces—fresh, sun-warmed, and ripening ; for youth is as supreme in Ibiza as age in the dead cities of the plain.

The head-dress of the girls was a bright *pañuelo* or handkerchief, orange-coloured for the most

## THE AMOURS OF SANTA EULALIA

part, knotted under the chin. It disclosed in the front a gleaming mass of black hair, scrupulously parted and brushed flat on either side, with a few strands on the forehead twisted into fine ringlets. At the back the hair was plaited into a pigtail as thick as a cable, at the end of which were tied long pink ribbons falling almost to the heels. The breast shone with an array of gold : in the centre a massive crucifix, above it an open crown, and below a large painted medallion of the Madonna or patron saint, a chain formed of large gilt lozenges falling in loops from the shoulders, and a number of finer chains arranged crossways. The fingers were almost wholly hidden by broad plated rings, to which delicate little threads of gold were attached, making a fringe about the finger-tips. Twelve large gold buttons were sewn closely together upon the sleeve from the wrist to the elbow. A shawl of yellow or blue fell from the shoulders to the waist, and below it hung a small apron of vivid green or mauve, the Ibicencas being fearless in adding colour to colour. The skirts were hooped in the early Victorian manner.

On the other side, where the men sat, the colouring was in a more sober scheme of blue and black. They wore a short loose jacket, cut away at the hips, an open pleated shirt, trousers which fitted closely at the knees and swelled out at the ankles sailor fashion. A red sash was wound twice or thrice round their waists, and round their



## THE USES OF MASS

necks was knotted a handkerchief of red silk or white lace. All carried in their hands a stiff, wide-brimmed *sombrero*, either black or drab in colour, with a black ribbon edged with yellow or pink. Their figures were short, alert, clean-limbed, moving freely without the unwieldiness of men who labour on the soil. Most of the youths wore a rose behind their ear. They entered the church with a brisk step, dropped for a few moments on the knee, made the three crosses over their brows, eyes, and mouth, kissed their thumbs, and then gave up their attention to the faces behind the fluttering fans on the other side of the nave.

Then began a fusillade of glances, which was returned from the masked batteries of the fans. The fire was no mere *feu de joie*, but a deadly encounter ; not a smile that was merely flippant or trivial or coquettish, but regards that were grave, as all ardour is grave. Then I knew that Mass may have other uses than that of devotion. One breathed something more intoxicating than the smoke of incense. The air was also heavy with the smoke of passion. There was an exciting contrast between the tranquil negotiation at the altar and the secret electrical intelligence of youthful bodies. The place was warm with breathing human emotion, life burning at the fever-point.

Certainly the chief business of Santa Eulalia is loving. It seems to have no other occupation.

## THE AMOURS OF SANTA EULALIA

To be sure, there are two or three corn mills along the river-side, but the river is a willing slave, and toils on feast days and holy days while the miller is away dancing. In one of the cool, obscure mills I spent the lazy hours after the midday *comida*, listening to the ancient, easeful noises—the chuckle of the water as it leapt upon the wheel, the tic-tac of the stick that shook the trickle of yellow grains out of the bin, the whirr of the ponderous mill-stones spinning round like teetotums. The flour dust danced in the shafts of light that slanted across the gloom. The miller's wife brought in a flask of purple wine that was passed round from mouth to mouth in a kind of loving cup. The *guardia civil* dropped in, as was his wont on a Sunday afternoon, grave, courteous, and handsome, as a *guardia civil* should be and almost invariably is.

“You must have little to do in a place like this?” I asked him. “Little enough,” he said, “if it weren't for the young men courting.” Happy Santa Eulalia, whose only crime is that of loving too well!

When the sun had begun to touch the rim of the western hills a faint tapping sound, like the beating of a tom-tom, came up from the seashore. I went down from the mill towards the sea, and found a company of boys and girls dancing on a level piece of ground just above the water's edge. A youth was beating on a small drum, long and

## DANCING BY THE SEA

narrow in the barrel, at the same time piping a tremulous air on a wooden pipe. It had a very limited range of notes, but it softened the monotonous rhythm of the *tamboril* and made a soothing, not unmelodious noise, full of ancient peace. The girls, with their fluttering silks and encumbering crinolines, glided round in circles with the minimum of motion, scarcely raising the foot above the ground, rarely swaying their bodies, their elbows bent and their hands lifted up in a prayer-like attitude. The boys leapt round them like young tigers at play, at the same time making a noisy clatter with the castanets. There was not the beauty of grace, but the beauty of strength and agility, in their movements. A shade more violence, and their dancing would have become a romp; but the fierceness which always seemed to be warming to some dangerous explosion was kept from trespass by a careful restraint. I think that a man who has seen dancing at sunset by the sea and among mountains will never afterwards have much content in a ball-room. The pure air, the unimprisoned space, the trembling light upon the water, unlock a happier and profounder fund of emotions. Something elemental and infinitely remote enters into the exhilaration of the dancers; they have recaptured a spirit which seems more proper to the sunlit early days of the world. Their personal life is merged in the universal life of Nature, and their bodies



## THE AMOURS OF SANTA EULALIA

are renewed by the ancient energies of the earth and the sea. And yet the emotion which is thus set free does not lose itself in an animal riot, because there is a traditional mould prepared for it to flow into, a controlling measure and impulse to which the limbs have moved for centuries.

Soon after night had fallen, the lads came up to the *fonda* to court Concepcion. Now I began to understand why the *guardia civil* had some occupation after all, for courtship in Ibiza is a delicate and dangerous negotiation. The girl is not hasty to attach herself to a single lover. Why should she be when she has the hearts of half a dozen suitors and more to play with? But the game is full of dangers, and it requires a firm and adroit hand to play it without disaster. No doubt the zest is in the danger, and no doubt that was why a darker colour flashed under Concepcion's skin when the group of figures came up to the door. She knew, and the *guardia civil* knew, that each of the broad red sashes hid an uneasy knife which could gleam so prettily in the moonlight if a look were a moment too long or a pressure of the hand something too intent. All passed inside with scarcely a greeting, except one youth who took the vacant seat next to Concepcion in the doorway. The others sat astride of benches in the interior with a glass of *anisado* and a pack of worn cards between their legs. But the play was not very animated, for they had a preoccu-



## THE QUARREL

pation. Neither was there much heartiness in their comradeship. Their lively playfulness was like that of young animals, half gambol and half quarrel. A jest was met with a quick, interrogatory look ; a laughing blow was followed by a difficult pause, during which peace and war hung in the scales of the balance. There was plenty of naked gunpowder lying about, and the sparks were dropping freely.

Every quarter of an hour or so the youth who was sitting next Concepcion in the doorway gave up his seat to a rival, and Concepcion measured out her smiles and glances with careful impartiality to each in turn. The rules of the game were clearly fixed, and so long as they were followed there was little danger of the powder catching fire. An hour or so had lapsed when the turn came to a handsome boy with fine eyes set under dark, bushy eyebrows, a straight nose, and a mouth that would have been perfect if the under lip had been a little less full. I suppose he must have played foul, although I am uncertain what rule he broke. Perhaps he was encroaching upon the time of the next comer, or perhaps—but the candle gave so little light that it was not easy to see distinctly. At all events, there were signs of discontent, angry exclamations, upsetting of benches, and general uproar. One whose turn had not yet arrived strode across to the offender and flung him out of his seat. The two faced one

## THE AMOURS OF SANTA EULALIA

another in the porch like game-cocks about to fight. Concepcion interposed. She laid her hand on the arm of the assailant and drew him into the seat beside her. The storm blew over for the moment, but there was thunder in the air, and the remainder of the evening passed uneasily.

Towards midnight the youths went away in a body, taking the road that led down to the sea. Under the shadow of the trees the tumult began again. They stopped at every half-dozen paces to emphasise their threats and recriminations. Each voice was lost in the general clamour. At every halt the altercation grew fiercer. At last they came to the edge of the sea. There they stood in a little excited knot, gesticulating, menacing, shouting shrilly and passionately. Then there was a sudden movement in the midst of the circle, as if one had lurched forward. Something shone in the moonlight, a cry went up sharper than any that had gone before, and one of the group staggered away a few paces with his hand over his face. When he put his hand down, I saw that his cheek was black with blood. The aggressor walked away quickly with a companion. The others gathered round the wounded boy and went off with him along the shore.

During the evening the sky had been dark and echoing with peals of thunder, but now the moon had risen with a brightness like that of dawn. The air was sultry. The scent of the sea mixed

## THE UNBEATEN TRACK

with sickly perfumes from the land. The earth seemed to be breathing warmly and pantingly. The shore was thick with dried seaweed, which silenced the footsteps of the retreating figures. When the voices passed out of earshot there was no sound but the lapping of the waves of the tideless sea and the discord of the frogs trilling their ardent loves. A soft rain began to fall. . . .

\* \* \*

As soon as you leave the level *carretera*, of which there is very little in Ibiza, travelling in a donkey-cart ceases to be the most tranquillising thing in life, and becomes the most exhausting. The side roads here are the worst of the three islands. Some of the hamlets are practically isolated as far as wheeled traffic is concerned. It had rained heavily during the night, and when I started soon after dawn the wheels of the cart sank deep into the soft red earth. We climbed up painfully from Santa Eulalia to the centre of the island, and then, after a few smooth miles on the high-road to San Juan Bantista, we plunged into a labyrinth of stony tracks through the hills to San Miguel. The *guardia civil* had told me that it was impossible to reach San Miguel with a cart, and it is always wise to take a *guardia civil's* word as the final truth. It is true that I reached San Miguel, but not until my nerves and the wheels of the donkey-cart were shattered to



## THE AMOURS OF SANTA EULALIA

pieces. The track descended in sudden, precipitous slopes, strewn with boulders, and at times, when a particularly deep cleft cut across the track, Bombita put his feet together and leaped from one rock to another like a mountain goat. Occasionally I took a peasant boy into the cart to act as pilot and direct me when it was preferable to leave the road and steer a line across the open country. At San Miguel I abandoned Bombita and the cart as useless encumbrances, and went forward on foot.

The scenery on the western side between St. Miguel and St. Antonio is perhaps the finest in the island. Ibiza, though it is smaller than Menorca, plays at being a continent. Bare brown hills, thinly covered with pines, rise one behind another in miniature ranges, giving an illusion of great extent. The more fertile slopes are banked up with stone terraces, on which are grown wheat, potatoes, tobacco, or sometimes vines. Here and there a white, windowless, flat-roofed house gleams among a luxuriant growth of cactus, with a single palm waving over it—for in Ibiza there are many little vignettes of Africa. The soil is not fruitful, but it has a wayward air of producing just what it will, more or less independently of man's cultivation. There is less of the suggestion of painful human effort than in the Mallorquin plain. The roads are deserted. Occasionally you see a bare-legged peasant woman in



## THE FORGOTTEN ISLE

a field, her skin the colour of the soil she bends over, her head wrapped up in a coloured handkerchief, wearing a wide white straw hat, edged with black and with long black ribbons streaming behind ; and occasionally on the roads you meet one of that small, alert race of men, with their sharply cut features, whose ancestry derives from some more mysterious and possibly more eastern stock than the Moors. When you travel at nightfall among the little dark valleys that dip between the hills, the country has so deserted and forlorn an aspect that it gives the impression of having been lost to human ken for centuries, and it is only when you catch the distant echo of a song that you remember the passionate race which inhabits it.

## IX

### THE IMPROVISERS

PERHAPS it was because the daylight was showing through the brim of my hat, perhaps because we all tramped into San Antonio together, but certainly the little port took it for granted that I was in partnership with Juan and Jaime. Juan and Jaime were two blind ballad-singers. Juan was totally blind, and had the resigned, attentive expression of a man who only overhears life. His face was not really cast in an intellectual mould, as you might at first have supposed, but merely showed how despair had finally worn down into asquiescence. He was scarcely past middle age, but a life of guitar playing had bent his head over his left breast. His guitar was always hanging at his side—I never saw him without it—and his delicate fingers kept straying among the strings. Juan was younger, and had not yet arrived at the total eclipse of blindness; but the painful, vertical line between his eyes told with what perplexity he groped his way in a twilight world, leading Jaime by the hand.

The *fonda* at San Antonio is without a café, a

## BLIND BALLAD-SINGERS

silent house, little frequented and kept by an ancient widow. She did not welcome us, but, on the other hand, she did not repel us. She allowed us to sit down on three chairs arranged in a row in the midst of an empty stone-floored room. I watched the grey light on the other side of the window-pane rapidly disappear, until at last my world became as obscure as that of Juan and Jaime, and then we all sat in equal silence and sightlessness. I don't know how long it was before the widow brought us a tallow candle and a little cold fish. There were no knives or forks—I suppose we were either too poor to pay for them or too blind to use them. The fish was for us all, the candle specially for me ; but I was the worse off, for Juan and Jaime used their fingers with more dexterity in their darkness than I in the flickering candle-light. The meal over, the ballad-singers had to go out to sing for money to pay for it, and I had to go out with them ; for as we were to sleep in an adjoining house and Juan was entrusted with the key, wherever Juan went I was obliged to follow.

I entered the café where we were to sing with the feeling of humility and self-effacement proper to a vagrant intruding upon a company of men who are established and respected, who are as easy in a café as if it were their own home, who can gamble away their ten or twenty centimos in an evening and never feel the loss. They were seated

## THE IMPROVISERS

round the tables in three or four groups, playing with cards which were printed with strange devices of suns, wine-cups, and blossoming boughs. They turned and glanced at us from beneath their *sombreros* as we entered, and I noticed them settle down a little more comfortably in their chairs when they saw us three purblind vagabonds come in sneakingly out of the night. Whether our singing would please them or not, at any rate, we had given them a few centimos' worth of added complacency. They felt the world a little more stable underneath them, the heart within them a little more at ease, the comfort of the *anisado* a point or two more emphatic. Such is the the use of beggars. There is a harshness in the commiseration of the poor for the very poor; the dividing-line is so narrow and the satisfaction of being on the right side so great. It seemed a chilly atmosphere to sing into, and it would take a merry song to warm it. But Juan and Jaime had taken the precaution to warm themselves with a glass of *caña*, a villainous kind of rum that stabs the heart like a knife. I guided their hands to the little glasses, and they raised the brimming liquor very steadily to their lips and tossed it down to their hearts in a single gulp. I was glad that they could not see the smiling pity with which they were watched, but I believe they felt it, for the perceptions of the blind are very fine and faithful. They broke the silence with a few



## THE AGES OF WOMEN

valiant chords, and then we began a caustic ballad about the ages of women. It went to a lively air which I have now forgotten, but I remember that we came down sharply on the last word of every couplet—

Las mugeres a los quince  
Son espuma de Champan,  
A los veinte son solera,  
y los treinta son cognac ;  
a los treinta y cinco, ajenjo  
que nos hace desbarrar,  
y en pasando de cuarenta. . . .

Here we paused, and then in the next line descended the scale in thirds, so as to get on to a sound bass foundation for firing off the final epigram—

Va—ya ca—lor,—  
Son vinagre nada mas !

The epigram must have missed fire, for no one uttered a word except a player who was counting the tricks. We tried them again with something a trifle less cynical, with just an inflection of romance in the voice and the music—

Siempre la muger se vende  
Y siempre el hombre la compra,  
Si es buena, toda la vida,  
Si es mala, por una hora.  
Solamente en los amores  
Que llama la gente malos  
Es donde nunca se pagan  
Los besos ni los abrazos.

## THE IMPROVISERS

I suppose the company did not approve the sentiment. Nobody appeared to be at all moved except Jaime, whose voice quavered with emotion, or it might have been with *caña*. He bent close over his guitar, and it seemed to be telling him things in an undertone which we could not hear. Perhaps it was telling him of the days before his head had sunk upon his breast and his eyes were sealed up, when the world had still a sun in it, and he took the joys of a man between Catalunian earth and sky.

As a last attempt we tried them with a few couplets sung to the well-known tune of the *Garrotin*—all about the war against the Riffs and the taking of Mount Gurugu, with the spirited refrain—

Que te quieres apostar,  
Que te quieres apostar,  
Que vengo del Gurugu ?

“What do you bet, what do you bet, that I come from the Gurugu ?” The company did not seem disposed to bet very much, but when Juan groped round with the little tray, the centimos that dropped in would certainly have bought a better supper than the cold fish and the tallow candle. I was about to pay for the *caña* that we had drunk, but the landlord’s wife shook her head kindly.

“You’re welcome to it,” she said ; “it won’t be many nights of the year that you get a taste of it.” And I answered, “No.”

## CORPUS CHRISTI

The next morning I was waked by Juan, saying, "*Compañero, se hace tarde, llega á las seis*"—"Comrade, it's late, nearly six o'clock." I found it was very late indeed, for when I went out to the café for breakfast the room was crowded and the card-players had already finished their third rubber. They were sitting in identically the same places as on the evening before, and I should have supposed that they had been sitting there all through the night but for the fact that now they were all in gala dress. For to-day was the feast of Corpus Christi.

I don't know whether the little port of San Antonio was aware that it was a feast day, although I half believe that towns listen to what is going on in the midst of them and that the long-lived inhabitants of brick and stone respond to the moods of their mortal companions. But certainly it must have felt that there was a special brightness in the air, for the little houses looked down and smiled at their white reflections in the water. Presently some boys climbed up on to the roof of the church and, fastening cords to the tongues of the two bells, began to ring them in a fashion of their own—striking the deep bell slowly and the shriller bell more quickly, so that the one seemed to be overtaking the other; then reversing their relations, the little bell slackened to a foot-pace, and the deeper one began to gallop after it. The fisher-boys carried the saints out of

## THE IMPROVISERS

the church on their shoulders, and the girls, shining with gold and orange-coloured silks, carried the Virgin. The priests appeared bearing the Host beneath its canopy. The port kneeled before it. The rose leaves showered from the balconies. The streets were full of a tranquil and happy sanctity.

The morning had been fresh, but the afternoon was threatening and oppressive. We were gathered round a wooden table in an inner room in the *fonda*, a company of fishermen and peasants and girls. A famous *copletista* had come in from the country, and we had assembled to hear him make poetry. He was a man of about five-and-thirty, with a face that an actor might have envied. All his expression was concentrated in his eyes. They were bright and beady. When he laughed, the laugh kindled in the eyes, travelling outwards through a hundred wrinkles at their corners and touching the mouth last of all; when he was troubled, the trouble distilled into moisture; and when he became passionate, the passion seemed to set the iris on fire.

We had no instrument, for the Ibicencos have never naturalised the guitar, and there was no tamboril at hand. Someone fetched a wooden measure, such as they use to measure out wheat, like a small bucket hooped with iron bands, narrower at the mouth than at the base. This and a small stick were given to the *copletista*. But he





THE PROCESSION OF CORPUS CHRISTI



## THE *COPLETISTA*

shook his head, said that he had no voice, that the mood was not upon him, that he was nervous, that to-day he would be a listener. I had learnt the value of Spanish refusals, and therefore I knew that he would sing when he had almost wearied our patience. But to-day more than the customary patience was needed—the greater the singer, the longer, I suppose, he was able to tease the importunity of his hearers. At length, having thoroughly felt the edge of the keenness of their desire, he rested his elbow upon the barrel and the barrel upon his knee ; and pulling out a white handkerchief, which had not yet been used that day—for it was still folded up into a neat square—he pressed it over his eyes with his right hand. Taking the stick in the other hand, he began to tap upon the bottom of the barrel. The tapping lasted many minutes, being a kind of invocation of the muse. At last he burst into a long, harsh, monotonous cry. The song was different from any that I had heard before. It came more closely to the bare monotone than the music which Spain has borrowed from the Moors. It was less passionate and less melancholy. It had just a tremor of laughter in it, a laughter that was not altogether wholesome, something between a sob and a sneer. But the most remarkable feature of it was a meaningless refrain at the end of every couplet, the use of which, I suppose, was to give the singer pause to improvise the

## THE IMPROVISERS

next lines. It is possible to write the syllables *yug—yug—yug—yug*—and they should be extended over half a dozen lines or so—but it is impossible to convey any idea of their strange hiccoughing intonation. Whether this incantation is also an inheritance from the Moors, or whether from one of the more ancient eastern peoples who have inhabited Ibiza, I am not learned enough in folk-music to say. Neither could I understand the burden of the song, for the words were in Ibicenco. They told me it was a song about love, but it must have been whetted with satire, for at times it shook the company with laughter.

When he had ended, the stick and the wooden measure were passed to a girl, who blinded her eyes in a similar fashion and began to improvise a song in the same unmelodious chant, only giving the refrain with a softer tremolo, more like the whinnying of a horse. Her voice in its ordinary tone had a certain natural beauty, but in her singing she seemed deliberately to suppress it and to conform to an inflection as traditional and impersonal as the melody itself. The improvised tamboril was handed round from one to another until almost all had sung. Some of the songs were of an interminable length, so that when the last was finished the hour of the evening meal had arrived.

The company went out. Juan and Jaime and I



## DECEITFUL BEAUTY

sat in our three chairs in the middle of the empty stone parlour. Darkness came in at the door. The streets were emptied of the gaily dressed throngs which had filled them all day. The feast of Corpus, which had begun with the noise of bells and of singing and of many voices, ended in a sudden hush. The burden of sadness which the blind ballad-singers carried upon them now seemed to be unloosed and to fill the darkness. I could hear Jaime's fingers tapping on the guitar. Occasionally he struck a single mournful note, and its vibrations shook the very citadel of the heart.

\* \* \*

The city of Ibiza, like many towns upon the Mediterranean, has a deceitful, mirage-like beauty. At a distance it shines like a mount of crystal, but as you approach it the wonder vanishes, and when you enter it you find it disorderly, rather squalid, with the features of a fishing village rather than of a capital. The streets are wide or narrow as chance has left them, but always steep and irregular. Every house has its balcony, with a fluttering array of clothes hung out; fowls pick about hopefully in the gutters; lambs and goats are tethered to the doorposts, treading a few wisps of dusty herbage under their feet. The crown of the hill is occupied by *La Ciudad*, the city proper, straitly confined within the massive fortification which was constructed in the fif-

## THE IMPROVISERS

teenth and sixteenth centuries to give it security from the Corsairs. When at last peace came to the Mediterranean shores, houses sprang up all round the harbour, forming the lower town known as *La Marina*. Here live the fishermen, the sailors, the day labourers, and here the life of the town is at its busiest.

Up above, the streets are empty and quiet, without a shop or a tavern or a café. The *Ciudad* is dominated by the grey, weather-worn cathedral. The structure is less than three hundred years old, but where it now stands there once stood the Moorish mosque, and before that the Greek temple of Minerva, and before that the Phœnician temple of Baal. For in Ibiza civilisation is buried beneath civilisation, but buried so deeply that the memory of them is forgotten. In the heart of a rocky slope outside the city walls is a still more ancient city, the necropolis of the Carthaginians, with its labyrinth of corridors and infinite multitude of chambers and tombs. But in the town itself almost all trace of the earlier occupations has perished. On either side of the *Portal de las Tablas* still stand the headless Roman statues; and here and there among the gleaming whitewashed houses of the *Ciudad* is a half-hidden Gothic arch or window of singularly delicate beauty; but these are all that remains of ancient grandeur. Once Ibiza lay close to the heart of the world. In return for its salt, the ore

THE CITY OF IBIZA







## SIC TRANSIT GLORIA MUNDI

of its mines, its rich purple dye, which rejoiced the daughters of Tyre, its terra-cotta figures, its earthenware vessels, with their miraculous property of healing those who suffered from the bite of serpents, the wealth of the Mediterranean flowed into it and exposed it to the covetousness of all the lawless rovers of the sea. Now it lies in a backwater, and its useless fortifications enclose nothing that any people covets. With its wealth, its magnificence has fallen from it. It has become shabby and neglected, like a woman who, having suffered a great misfortune, ceases to care for her beauty. But neglect can never rob it of the beauty of its site. It sits upon its lonely heights above the sea, and from whatever side and at whatever time you approach it, it shines with a kind of enchantment. But it is most enchanted when the skirts of sunset are trailing on the hills, when it is starred with lights, and when its reflection strikes upon the golden floor of the bay like a single palace, and that a fairy one.

*La Marina* certainly never wastes its regret upon the past. It lives its own life busily and noisily, chaffering all the morning under the mock Parthenon which it has built for a market, and in the evening strolling beneath the immature trees of the *Paseo de Vara de Rey*, which it has constructed to remind itself that it is a capital. But it is busiest and noisiest on the Sunday after Corpus Christi, when it celebrates a second Corpus

## THE IMPROVISERS

Christi feast all of its own. The clothes are removed from the balconies, and their place is taken by gay brocades, antimacassars, quilts, anything that is rich enough in the primary colours; flags are stretched across the streets; gaudy little shrines are erected against the houses; every vacant space is covered with yellow and red, the national colours of Spain. Early in the morning the long, narrow mule-carts begin to arrive from San Juan, San Antonio, and Santa Eulalia, and soon it is scarcely possible to pass along the streets for the crowd of girls in hooped skirts, and men with black, overshadowing *sombreros*. All day long the children flock into the Arab-like church of the Saviour, stroking the cheek, the hand, and the dress of the Virgin, and then kissing the fingers that have dared to be so presumptuously intimate.

On the stroke of five, when the upper half of the houses is still bathed in sunlight and the lower half full of illuminated shadow, the saints begin to emerge from the church. This is their one annual holiday, the day on which they escape from their stuffy glass shrines and for a few brief hours take the air and feel the sun. St. Roche comes first, diffidently holding up his brown robe with his thumb and forefinger so as to expose to the inhabitants of the port the honourable scar upon his thigh, his head modestly averted to the left. He is followed by St. Sebastian, who even



THE SAINT'S HOLIDAY





## PROCESSIONAL

to-day has no respite from the agony of the arrows which lodge in his naked body. The lower branches of the tree to which he is bound support the black felt hats of his bearers. St. Francis points smilingly upwards to the strip of blue between the whitewashed walls with all that remains of his broken forefinger. It is decorated with a ring of pink ribbon, which perhaps serves as a bandage. St. Peter shows no sign of pleasure in his annual excursion, and St. Nicholas appears to be incommoded in his task of reading the volume which he holds in his hands by the dust and heat and the tumult of the crowd. Lastly comes the Virgin, all radiant in gold, smiling benedictions. The procession jostles its way slowly and painfully among the crowds, with all those manifestations of devotion, irritation, awe, hilarity, and tedium which accompany a religious festival in countries where the Church is humble and friendly and humane: the agitated efforts of the *curas* to smack the children into line; the blowing out and relighting of candles; the annoyance of the corporation at the dripping wax; the baffled attempt of the soldiers to preserve a formal goose-step in the midst of the pushing of the crowd; the concern when the canopy above the priests strikes against an overspreading tree and imperils the safety of the monstrance; the sulking of the bandsmen, who cannot play because of the irruption of people among the band

## THE IMPROVISERS

and the dislodgment of the music pinned upon the backs of the players in front ; the whistling and signalling when the van of the procession goes marching on unaware that the rear has halted to pray at a shrine ; the welcome rests at the shrines, when the priest kneels before the artificial flowers and glass shades, and the bandsmen relight their cigarettes ; the devout sinking of the women upon their knees when the Host passes, and their voluble indignation when the men tread upon their skirts ; and then, when the last bareheaded *guardia civil* has passed, the plunge through the side streets to witness the whole performance over again.

At last the procession emerges from the stifling narrow streets into the cool, broad spaces along the quay. The water is a serene expanse of turquoise, with long tracts of silver where it is ruffled by the wind. St. Francis smiles kindly upon his little sister the sea, but St. Peter regards it with stern malevolence, because he remembers the weeping women who have implored his protection for their sons in vain, and because he knows that there is an evil laughter in its heart and because it is stronger than he. St. Roche cannot see it, as unfortunately he is obliged to look towards the left ; and St. Nicholas will not, because he refuses to cease his pretence of reading the blank page of his wooden book. Presently the procession reaches the little Arab church. The

## FORMENTERA

*guardia civiles* kneel at the entrance. Sorrowfully the saints return to their prison-house. One by one they are locked in behind the glass doors of their little shrines in the dark side-chapels, there to stand with their fixed attitudes, engrossed in their tedious occupations, until the next festival of Corpus will permit them once again to rejoice in the crowds and the flags and the sun and the sea.

\* \* \*

On a day of brilliant sunshine, when the eye was so dazzled with light that the sea appeared to be a sombre indigo and the bare hills of Ibiza as white as if they had been covered with hoar-frost, I sailed across to Formentera, the lesser of the Pythiusæ, in a *falucha*. Less than five miles of water separate the two islands; from the city of Ibiza to the port of Formentera the distance is about twice as great, but we made the crossing in less than two hours. Formentera has little of the beauty of the sister island. It is a flat, arid, monotonous tract of land, rising into sudden cliffs at its eastern and western extremities. The soil is poor and thinly covered with stunted pines; the houses meagre and scattered. A road as straight as an arrow runs inland for two miles from the *Salinas* near the seashore, where the salt is evaporated in low-lying reservoirs, to the little hamlet of St. Francisco Javier, with its fortified, whitewashed church.



## THE IMPROVISERS

When I returned in the afternoon to the harbour where we had landed, I found that the three or four *faluchas* which had brought over passengers in the morning had already left. It appeared that I was marooned on this desolate island. I saw, however, underneath a high wooden staging a large two-masted *falucha* being loaded with salt. It was due to sail as soon as the cargo was got on board, and the captain agreed to take me as well for a couple of *reales*. The fresh breeze which had been blowing in the morning had dropped. As soon as we were well out of the harbour the small lateen sail under which we had started was lowered and a larger one of enormous proportions was hoisted. The yard, which was formed of three light beams lashed together, was of prodigious length, and seemed to slant down in a fine arch from the very depth of the sky itself. But, in spite of the great expanse of canvas, we glided scarcely perceptibly through the water. The hatches were opened, and the sailors began to shovel the salt prodigally into the sea, until almost half the cargo was thrown overboard. "*No vale nada,*" they laughed — it's worth nothing!

The sun was now setting, and Juanito, a beautiful brown-skinned boy with laughing eyes, began to make preparations for supper. He fanned a fire in a little brasier into a blaze, and set upon it a bowl full of chipped potatoes and bleeding



## BECALMED

fragments of meat, the whole soaked in water and oil. When it was cooked, we all gathered round and dipped into the dish with wooden forks. There was also a dish of lettuce, damped with wine. Wine was handed round in a long-necked bottle which had a tapering spout in its side. Out of this the sailors drank dexterously, holding it high above their heads and letting the wine spurt into their mouths in a thin red thread. They were hearty, kindly fellows, larger limbed than the peasants of Ibiza, with a more distinctively Spanish cast of features. After supper, they rolled cigarettes of the rank-smelling *pota*, a coarse tobacco which is grown in the island. The wind had dropped down to a few fitful gusts ; now and again the sail tugged uselessly at the ropes, and finally hung idle against the mast. The hills of Ibiza, not three miles away, glowed with the dark, luminous colours which objects take when the sun goes down in a bed of pure gold. The lights of the city shone very faintly in the further distance. The sailors began to sing. The Spaniard cannot sing without some rhythmic accompaniment, and as we had no instrument on board, Juanito produced an old saw and a copper coin, which served as a primitive guitar. They sang chiefly in Castilian, and the song had a different character from that of the Ibicenco peasants. The last word of the couplet was drawn out in long, falling cadences which rose again like

## THE IMPROVISERS

dying echoes. The music was melancholy, and the words often full of the heart's sadness.

*Mas me valiera  
no haber nacido  
que haber sufrido  
tanto penar.*

“ Better for me never to have been born than to have suffered so great trouble.”

When the turn came to Juanito, he was silent for a few moments and looked away from us to where the last smoky clouds of sunset burned over the hills, and to where the moon rose with a tremulous splendour in the dark velvet violet of the east. I am not sure whether the couplets were remembered or whether they were improvised, but I rather think that he made them as he sang. They were in Castilian and unrhymed, but they fall inevitably into rhyme in a literal English translation.

The day has its sun  
And the night has its moon,  
And I have my love—  
I shall cherish her soon.  
More dark than the night,  
She is dearer to me  
Than the moon and the sun  
And the stars on the sea.

His boyish voice rang out as clear as a bell over the still waters, and ended in a long, trembling note into which the heart seemed to wring the

## JUANITO'S LOVE-SONG

very dregs of its desire. After that he sang of the way the Spaniards died in the war in Cuba, and how they would have won if their generals had not sold them, and then he invented a sanguinary war in which England and Spain were to drive the North Americans off the sea. Juanito had no cosmopolitan sentiments.

At last darkness fell over us, and the stars shone out between the sails. It was a dead calm, and we could not hope to reach Ibiza until the dawn brought us a breeze. The sailors lay down on the deck to sleep. The spectral figure of the steersman stood at the helm, muffled in a great black coat with a hood that covered his head and half his face. A sticky sea dew settled down on us and soaked our clothes. The water washed about on the deck, for the *falucha* was an old one and heavily loaded. The night was bitterly chill. Juanito wrapped his blanket more closely round him. The boat rocked very gently, and as I lay awake, looking up at the tall yard which seemed to knock against the stars, I heard him chanting himself to sleep—

dearer to me  
Than the moon and the sun  
And the stars on the sea.





**SARDINIA**



## X

### CAGLIARI

IN each of the islands of the Western Mediterranean Nature appears to have prepared a seat for the capital city. Undoubtedly she has done most handsomely by Cagliari. The southern coast of Sardinia follows the curve of an ample bay, the Golfo degli Angeli, a blue-carpeted presence-chamber which conducts to the rocky throne carefully placed at a point midway upon the sweeping arc. Thereupon Cagliari reclines with a regal, if somewhat careless, ease.

These capital cities are ideally designed. Neither Mahon nor Ibiza nor Cagliari has a single building of exceptional beauty, but all of them have the knack of making the best of themselves. They are so disposed upon the terraces of the hillside that the eye comprehends them in a single glance. They give the effect of a single structure. They are broadly based upon the shore, they climb upwards in narrowing tiers, and they are crowned by a cathedral and a citadel. Cagliari wears the noblest crown. The hill rises to a height of four hundred feet, and falls sheer on every side

## CAGLIARI

but one. Its summit is ringed round by a massive wall which the Pisans constructed in the thirteenth century. The towers of the Lion and the Elephant stand like sentries at two of the angles of the fortifications. Of the third, the Eagle, which completed the triangle, only the base now remains. In the centre rise the tower and dome of the cathedral.

The cities are also alike in that they disappoint you when you enter them. They promise more than they can fulfil. Mahon is comfortable but mean; Ibiza is content to be merely a glorified fishing village; Cagliari, which is larger than either of them by forty thousand inhabitants, is also the most ambitious. It aspires to be a little Paris. Happily, it will never succeed, for not the combined energy and genius of a Haussmann and a Napoleon III could convert the lanes and staircases that climb up to the Castello into boulevards. It has, it is true, in its lower levels avenues of the approved cosmopolitan type, replete with tram-lines, rows of poplars and cast-iron seats, steel-framed buildings which only look the more bourgeois the more they pretend to the aristocratic manner, monuments of defunct public men faithfully perpetuating in marble the uninspired rhetoric of their public speeches. But these the discriminating observer perceives to be no part or parcel of the true Cagliari. He will mount the steep *scalette* and pass under the dark archways



## ITALIAN STREETS

that lead to the quarter of the Castle. Here the streets are cleft like ravines through solid blocks of buildings, malodorous, narrow, and gloomy even in the light of an August noon. The houses are piled up story upon story, so that when you peer upwards from the pavement their tops appear but a span's length beneath the blue. Yet in spite of their great height they are mean and poverty-stricken.

Into these long, sunless alleys Cagliari pours out its teeming life. Here, as in all Italian towns, the poor defeat the *tedium vitæ* by an interested contemplation of each other's privacy. Here the age of innocence is still uncorrupted by any modern notions of propriety. It is not felt that there are any details of person or toilette which it is necessary to conceal. The rooms of the ground-floor, whether bedrooms or sitting-rooms—and commonly they are both in one—gape upon the street, and the street gapes back upon them. You are invited to scrutinise the bed that is never made and the meal that is never cleared away. All the businesses of the household—the cooking, washing, scrubbing, the paring of potatoes, the suckling of infants, the sewing of undergarments—are conducted in public. The children crawl about the threshold with a strict economy of clothing. The men sleep upon the floor, and in their waking intervals approve or criticise the activities of the women. Family concerns of

## CAGLIARI

great delicacy are disputed with eloquence and anger. Every household appears to be in the throes of a domestic crisis. Every child is apparently only prevented from the committal of some high misdemeanour by piercing expostulations. Above all this scene of superabundant vitality flutters an array of brilliant and tattered linen, which gives the street the air of being perpetually *en fête*. Washing clothes is a kind of passion in Cagliari, yet nobody ever wears clean ones. Everybody is in undress. Perhaps there is no time to dress—perhaps everybody is too excited about his own or his neighbour's business to think of it. Certainly the streets are the chief entertainment that Cagliari has to offer.

To the stranger all this sordidness and shamelessness of living is at first disconcerting, even shocking. When the first fit of disgust is over, it becomes almost endearing. How is it that walking through the streets is so much more exciting and exhilarating a business in a town of Southern Europe than in an English town? The strangeness of accent and colour and gesture do not altogether account for the fascination. There is something in the atmosphere which eludes the inquiry of the five senses and touches an inward nerve with the thrill of an electric current. It is the shock of impact with a life that is no longer carefully clothed as in the north, nor yet merely in dishabille, but frankly naked and unashamed. It

## THE MAN IN THE STREET

is the sudden surprising vision of the animal basis of life, upon which every civilisation stands, but which most civilisations have more or less covered up. In an English town I have the feeling that there is a silent conspiracy to deny the existence of one-half of the facts of life. And, indeed, they are so skilfully concealed that their existence almost begins to be a matter of doubt. In the streets I see a crowd of individuals, or rather of uniforms, beneath which individuality is hidden, directed by policemen, moving with a swift and single purpose, accomplishing the objects of their business and pleasure with a marvellous orderliness and precision, but without zest or delight or anger. I feel that they neither desire nor hate anything very strongly. In the working of this smooth machine I see no play of passion or emotion. Nature is so much overlaid that I come to believe that this race of city-dwellers is indeed some new order of being, not sprung from Adam, owning no ancestry that fought upon bleak hill-sides and lit fires in the shadowy woods at night and worshipped on a great plain at dawn, having no memory even of the scent of the earth newly upturned by the plough or of cattle in the byre, nor deriving anything from the influence of mountains or the sea. They have a contempt for the laborious and unmethodical processes of Nature's teaching, and have put such faith as they possess in book edu-



## CAGLIARI

cation, with its quick methods and positive results. They have learned to be logical, and so have secured themselves against molestation by the great disturbing emotions.

In the streets of Cagliari I found myself caught in a fiercer current of human life, the source of which is indefinitely far back in time. Their inhabitants appeared to have escaped the temperate influence of the nineteenth century, which did more to tidy and tame humanity than all the other centuries put together. They have the bearing of an earlier age, when the human spirit was still capable of any divine frenzy and any brutal extravagance. They have not yet emerged out of the Middle Ages—perhaps not even entered into them. These half-clad men and women who encamped upon the pavement, squatted round glowing braziers, tore the roasted fish and meat with their fingers, caressed and struck one another, laughed, quarrelled, and gesticulated, were the same with those who had marched and counter-marched across Europe, dispossessed feebler peoples of their valleys and islands, fought, conquered and been defeated, created revolutions, lived the whole uneasy, violent life of our race. They were ready to live it again—were, in fact, living it now. They had lived close to the soil for innumerable generations. Though now they inhabited a city, the city had not entered into their soul. They had the air of caged animals



## THE IMMORTAL BODY

who never forget the ways of the wild. Even the accessories of their life seemed, like themselves, to have escaped the deforming touch of modern civilisation. Their household utensils and the implements of their trade were those clever yet elementary and always beautiful contrivances which came in happy moments to primitive craftsmen in the infancy of the arts, and have served the uses of a hundred generations without losing anything of their simple grace. The very material of clay and wood seemed not yet to have forgotten its origin in the forest and the field. Their food, too, was of the kind proper to a primitive life—bread and wine and fruit and flesh—nothing that had passed through many processes of manufacture, or was far removed from its sources. In these streets one feels oneself nearer to elemental things, nearer to the human body, whose exigencies have, after all, determined the whole course of history from the parting of Abraham and Lot to the clauses of the last Finance Bill. These people live more with their bodies than with their brains. They satisfy their instincts without any oblique glances at a moral code, not doubting that an instinct exists for any purpose other than that of its immediate satisfaction. They are frankly glad to see an overburdened horse suffer or a dog die in the gutter or anger burst out between man and man. They are unabashed at their own emotions. They ex-

## CAGLIARI

press naked truths in naked language. There is nothing in human life that they shrink from. Their sensations are so simple and vivid, their expression of them so swift and direct, that on looking at this crowd I felt myself in some unaccountable way nearer to the men and women of Shakespeare and Dante and the Bible, nearer to the endless tragedy of humanity.

\* \* \*

The charm of Cagliari is that you are always forgetting it. Every town has the nature of a prison, but none has so many loopholes as Cagliari. With a fine air of modesty it denies its own allurements and continually invites you to look away from it. If the town were German, every other square and avenue would be placarded "Schöne Aussicht." The dark, viewless streets end abruptly in piazzas and terraces, airy platforms buttressed by the city walls, from whence you look down upon such a semicircle of land and sea that you appear to be peeping over the edge of the world. I know no town which allows itself to be so much invaded by the spirit of the country. To live in it is to live upon a mountain-side, perpetually refreshed by the exhilarating environment of space. Its southern base is washed by the sea; on either side stretch the shining levels of lagoons; from the north the green plain of the Campidano sweeps round it like an ample



VIALE REGINA, CAGLIARI





## THE HANGING GARDEN

lawn ; for background is the distant amphitheatre of hills beyond whose peaks lies the true untamed Sardinia.

The most felicitous of all these fascinating view-places is the Bastione San Remy. The old fortifications have been remodelled, so as to form a kind of piazza upon the very roof of the city. The steep wall has been refaced at this southern angle with pillars and colonnades, which give it something of the appearance of the façade of a Renaissance palace. A double staircase leads upwards beneath a triumphal arch on to a spacious terrace, with a floor as smooth and shining as that of a ball-room. A few rugged stone pines, throwing dark blots of shadow upon the pavement, transform the piazza into a garden ; but no garden, except perhaps the hanging gardens of Babylon, was ever so pleasantly suspended between earth and heaven. It is a wonderful aerial arbour, where you can sit and, with a kind of divine detachment, look down and contemplate upon the world. Seen from this dizzy height, the world becomes unreal. At sunset, when the *stagni* lie at your feet like pools of blood, and the purple mountains of Iglesias cut out a ragged sky-line against a sheet of flame, the view confronts you with the reckless exaggeration of the drop-scene of a theatre.

On the Bastione San Remy the life of Cagliari is at its gayest. Throughout the days of summer

## CAGLIARI

it flashes and burns like a lake of fire ; it is intolerable and deserted. But as soon as the cool evening breezes begin to play, it becomes thronged with people. The children come first, troops of them, for it is their playground. They play their serious games with that arch gravity which is a second nature in children of the Latin race. Their childhood has not quite the same freedom and simplicity as that of the children of other races. With a grace that is not altogether artless they play at the diverting game of being grown up. The little brightly-frocked girls, with their short socks and long, brown legs, seem to find in this evening promenade the gaiety and excitement of a dance. They link their arms amorously, flutter their fans, dart at the passer-by a single alluring glance, stop to whisper their improbable secrets, then burst into low peals of laughter, brimful of consequence, intrigue, and mirth, inhabiting a world that is far more exciting and mysterious than that of their elders. Their gestures are carried out with a finish and precision that are in ludicrous contrast with the nothings of their dialogue. They have acquired by unconscious imitation all the artifice and stratagem that have been brought to delicate perfection in the truceless social warfare of men and women, and they apply them with delightful inconsequence to their own infinitesimal concerns. There is no more agreeable occupation in

## LATIN CHILDREN

Cagliari than to watch this lovable world in little, so sagely foolish and so gravely irresponsible, innocently echoing and mimicking the vanities of the other, older world, less innocent and surely less serious. They have the drollness of troupes of dogs going through elaborate tricks which they only half understand, but with perfect spontaneity and pure delight in the game of make-believe—a game which very suddenly, almost before they are aware of it, they find they are playing in earnest. There is one moment, however, when they forget their naïve coquetry, and their transparent disingenuity deserts them. It is just at the end of that swift Mediterranean twilight when night rushes up over the rim of the bay. The arc lamps, almost as high over their heads as the moon, begin to glow, flutter a little in the throes of birth, then at last fill all the piazza with a cold and steady radiance. At once a clear shout of joy goes up from a hundred throats—the very voice of childhood speaking in its own uncorrupted accent. And, since speech is never adequate for the expression of the delight of childhood, a hundred light bodies begin to dance and leap and dart like fire-flies among the crowd until the whole piazza rocks in a momentary fairy riot.

There is a discreet restaurant on the Bastione San Remy, hidden out of sight during the daytime, but in the evening overflowing in little white tables on to the piazza. The food is in-



## CAGLIARI

different, and the wine, which is grown on the plain below, sound, though uninteresting. The waiter leaves you very much to your own meditations, but it is the one restaurant in the world where you are grateful for inattention.

It is also one of the few restaurants in the world where the meal is an afterthought which it would be indelicate to take seriously. You go there for finer sensations than those of the palate—to sit beneath the stars, to breathe the scent of gardens and the sea, to survey the miniature stage of human life, and to catch and lose the threads of half a hundred plots as the actors pass and re-pass on the other side of the white tablecloth. The bourgeoisie of Cagliari are so distinguished that they almost persuade you that the middling class of society may yet bring some fine flower of civilisation to bloom. Their dress is gay without pretension; their talk quiet, but animated; something of the dignity and serenity of the evening has entered into their manner. They have attained that mode or habit of the spirit by which alone, it seems to me, you may judge whether a people be truly civilised or not—a calm and delighted possession of the moment as it passes, a content of the body and the mind which can sustain itself without the gratification of the senses or the excitement of extraneous entertainment.

It was one evening when I was sitting outside this restaurant that I was surprised by one of



## A RED-LETTER MOMENT

those moments of which I have said that every traveller is in search. Do not think that I have so soon forgotten that it is presumptuous, as well as useless, for any traveller to attempt to direct any other to one of those oases where he found the deep well of contentment. I am holding out no assurance, offering not the most tentative recommendation. If I erect a finger-post pointing to the Bastione San Remy, I undertake no responsibility for your journey or guarantee that you will find any oasis at the end of it. For although, if I am to believe the evidence of my senses, which is never the least of the acts of faith, I was sitting that night outside the restaurant at the table nearest to the parapet, I must add, like the apostle, that whether I was in the body or out of the body I cannot tell. I think it must have been rather late. The arc lamps had been put out. The children and the waiter had long been asleep. Distance calmed the fever of the fretful Italian music that a band was playing at the other end of the piazza. The promenaders had grown silent—only the shuffling of their feet over the smooth stones was heard, like the sound of dancers dancing to inaudible measures. The crest of the hills traced a faint line against a sky that was soft and lustrous as a black pearl. One or two red lights starred the sea. The moon slid her fairy fingers over the earth. Everything conspired to create that moment of sublime

## CAGLIARI

content when "to do naught is in itself almost an act."

\* \* \*

Cagliari has no great monuments. It has some fifty churches, but not one of them is remarkable. Most of them had the misfortune to be built or restored at a period when that element of vulgarity, which perhaps is latent in almost all Renaissance work, had thrown off all the moderating restraint of classical models. The period synchronised with the political predominance of the Jesuits, who, however numerous their virtues, certainly very nearly monopolised the bad taste of Europe for the time being. Their somewhat nervous anxiety to be as up-to-date in their system of architecture as in their system of education led to the most unconscionable bedevilment of the traditions of the Renaissance. I am not sure that if the architectural pedigree of the modern music-hall were traced back far enough it would be found to derive from the Jesuit Church. The Jesuits have left their mark upon Cagliari in sinuous frontages, broken pediments, Egyptian obelisks, twisted columns, and all the feverish straining after originality which always accompanies the last struggle for life of a moribund style. But Italian vulgarity is peculiar in the fact that it is never entirely displeasing. It is vulgarity in the grand manner. It has always

## MAGNIFICENT VULGARITY

some gesture of magnificence. Unlike English vulgarity of style, it does not arise merely out of a misapprehension of the true models. It has the unabashed confidence to attempt to better the best. It has the same colossal self-assurance as those marionette shows which seek not so much to mimic as to transcend drama. At first you are amused at their grandiloquence and rhetorical arabesque, but there is such a noble exaggeration in the manner of it, such a spirited attempt to outdo the real thing, such vitality, such gusto, that in the end you are swept out of your critical moorings and enthusiastically applaud the triumph of the sublime over the ridiculous. There is the same convincing bombast in the vulgarity of Italian architecture. It takes the judgment by storm. It is never dull or pompous, and therefore can always stifle protest by arousing laughter. The Baroco style is never sufficiently serious to be taken seriously. And who but the Italians could have lifted their vulgarity to the dignity of a style?

Even the cathedral of Cagliari has not escaped the fate of the other churches. Perhaps it is well that it has not. Judging by the excellent severity of the fragments that remain—the doors, the *amboni* or pulpits, the lions which support the altar steps—the Gothic cathedral which the Pisans in the thirteenth century built to the honour of *la gran Madre di Dio* would have been



## CAGLIARI

out of sympathy with the spirit of modern Cagliari. But in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was modernised, embellished, and generally debased to the level of a later taste. Its side-chapels were decorated with massy marble columns, twisted like the posts that support a bed-tester. Rebellious marble angels were suspended head downwards over the altars in the act of falling headlong from heaven. Its mural decoration, like that of almost all the churches of Cagliari, is in the weak and secular manner of a second-rate restaurant. But it was impossible for the most degenerate taste to degrade the finely coloured Sardinian marbles, which in any disposition achieve grave but cheerful harmonies of yellow, dull red, and black. The windows admit a flood of untempered light. The cathedral has none of the sombreness of the Spanish churches. It appears that the Sardinian spirit of devotion is un-mixed with mystery. The music ripples in cascades from the organ with the gaiety of a gavotte. The choristers render the chants in the spirit of glees. The worshippers kneel elegantly upon fald-stools and display their elaborate fans with self-conscious grace. There is something of indolence, one might almost say of sensuousness, in their devotion. The whole function goes off with a kind of elegance and ease proper to the life of the place.

\*

\*

\*



## THE FOUR QUARTERS

Aristocratic Cagliari lives loftily apart entrenched behind the Pisan wall. In the *Quartiere di Castello* stand the ancient and official edifices—the Castle, the prefectoral and the municipal palaces, the palaces, such as they are, of the nobility, the Cathedral, the University, the Court of Appeal. The towers of the Lion and the Elephant are the immortal sentries which guard its dignity. A town of quite another character has sprung up in the mercantile and industrial quarters of the *Marina*, *Stampace*, and *Villanuova*, at the foot of the hill. They are occupied with some business which seems to demand a certain bustling activity, although I never quite discovered the nature of the occupation. There are situated the coal wharves, warehouses, factories, gasometers, and other unsightly objects which do not comport with the character that one's prejudices have attributed to the shores of the Mediterranean. Truly Cagliari has been careless of appearances. It has been at no pains to adjust itself to a harmony with the theatrical nature of the landscape. Yet when you draw away from the city, and from across the water view the lines of white buildings gleaming upon the flanks of the white rock, you cannot deny that its progressiveness has robbed it of nothing of its wonderful pose and charm.

It seems to me that the beauty of southern life is pretty nearly all luck. We allow the Mediter-

## CAGLIARI

anean peoples a genius for beauty and a certain elegance in their mode of life which, if it really has a foundation in fact, belongs to them merely by the accident of geography. Our notions of the Mediterranean of to-day are still biassed by the traditions of Greece and Rome. But the race has changed and the traditions have been forgotten. We are at once too magnanimous and too self-depreciatory. We are accustomed to think of ourselves as Philistines who have sacrificed æsthetic sensibility to commercial success. I suspect that our only crime is our climate. If we had only had the southern sky, we should also have had the southern gaiety and grace of living. Given the light and mildness of the southern day, we too should have inhabited the street and the piazza, acquired the largeness and amiability of public life, escaped the angularity and reserve which our habits of privacy have bred in us. With a different soil our buildings also would have been of marble, and they could not have been worse than those of modern Italy. On those rocky thrones of the Mediterranean shore it scarcely matters what you build. Atmosphere comes to the architect's aid and informs his design with a beauty which was surely never conceived in his brain. The sun is generous and pardoning. It ennobles the scheme, fuses it together in a jewel-like mass for which the mountains and the sea provide the incomparable setting. The mod-

## THE LUCK OF LATITUDE

ern Italian contributes little to the beauty of his environment. In so far as it attracts foreign gold, he values it as a commercial asset. But he is not enthusiastic about it. He shrewdly suspects that picturesqueness and poverty go hand in hand, and he would willingly sacrifice the one in order to get rid of the other. Beauty has no cult in Italy nowadays. She is shamefully cold-shouldered, like a poor relation who has seen better days, but now is scarcely a creditable person to be seen in company with. And yet she forgives all ingratitude, clings to her ancient haunts, and refuses to be driven out.

I don't believe that Cagliari has a more gracious conception of life than Manchester. But it has a more gracious mien. It is more amply furnished with the natural amenities of life. If here the refinements of civilisation—sewing-machines, typewriters, photographic apparatus, and the like—are more costly, the commoner comforts of fruit and wine are cheap enough. To realise enjoyment you have only to look over the walls upon that design of lagoon and mountain and sea which surrounds the city like a painted panorama. The demands of comfort are satisfied with no greater exertion than that of stepping across the street from the sun into the shade or from the shade into the sun, according to the time of day. You can never walk far without seeing children playing and hearing laughter. At noon naked

## CAGLIARI

urchins, whose bodies have the mould of statues and the golden glow of a Giorgione, play in the waters of the harbour. In the evening the young moon over the sea, and the red glow upon the *stagni* provide a sufficient entertainment for the uneager throngs that fill the piazza. Midnight has long passed before the last of the serenaders is silent. . . .

It is the luck of latitude.



## XI

### THE GATE OF SILVER

TRAVEL wins its end, which is the liberation of the mind from the tyranny of a particular environment, when it takes you not merely to a different degree of latitude, but also into a different year of Grace, or even into an age before the years of Grace began. Civilisation takes its time from one or two great cities. The clocks of the rest of the world are slow—by a decade, by a century, or even by a thousand years and more. Only a fraction of the world has yet entered into the twentieth century. Most of Europe even is in the eighteenth. In some parts the Renaissance is long overdue, and there are others from which the dim old pagan gods have never yet been hunted out. It is not easy to say precisely what o'clock it is in Barbagia, which is the heart of Sardinia. When at a turn of the road you encounter a cavalcade of horsemen in scarlet tunics with white-slashed sleeves, the period appears to be that of the sixteenth or seventeenth century; when you overhear a sorrowful dirge and see a procession of hooded figures passing through the tortuous streets of an age-blackened town, you are in the middle of the Middle Ages; when a

## THE GATE OF SILVER

woman with a pitcher on her head and all Assyria in her face greets you with the salutation, "May Jesus Christ be praised," you are not far from the beginning of our era; when in a glade of the forest you surprise a group of herdsmen gathered round a wineskin, some drinking, some dancing an ancient, almost forgotten measure to the accompaniment of Pan's pipes, you know that you have passed down the labyrinth of all the Christian centuries and come out into the spacious sunlight of the pagan world.

\* \* \*

The feast of Saint John—Midsummer Day—dawned with unusual triumph. A saffron-coloured moon rode low over the mountain-tops in a rosy mist, paling to silver as the sky changed from rose to a watery ocean-green and from green to a milky blue. The little town of Aritzo was limned in half a dozen tones of sepia against the eastern slope of a wooded valley. The streets were still full of luminous shadow. There was the smell of dawn in the air—that indefinable, pungent freshness compounded of the scent of dew-wet fields, the breath of cattle, and the smoke of kindling wood fires.

In the shadow of the Albergo Simoncini four rough-coated mountain horses stood with lazily drooping heads. The two mares had brought their fillies with them, and were nosing them con-



BARBAGIAN HORSEMEN





## SIGNORE DEMONTI

tentedly as they took their morning fill of milk. Signore Demonti had already got himself mounted—a feat which his too solid flesh compelled him to perform in secret. Signore Demonti was a Guard of the Royal Forests. A generation ago King Umberto had clothed him in a uniform of blue with green facings and a postman's cap ; but the suns and dripping forests of Sardinia had modified the royal design, substituting facings of sere yellow upon a sober grey. He had the face which is proper to officials all the world over—the broad, fat nose, drooping, grizzled moustache, pouched cheeks, heavy, unshaved chins, and that uneasy expression of a man who is a tyrant to the world beneath him and a sycophant to the world above. This morning, perched aloft, god-like, with the sword and pistol with which he guarded the royal forests lying menacingly alongside his tight, thick thighs, he had all the world beneath him and surveyed it with an air of gloomy distrust.

Felipe was slow in appearing. He was the surveyor of the royal forests. To-day we were to perambulate the bounds and settle a disputed frontier with some aggrieved peasants. When at length we were all comfortably seated in the high-peaked Sardinian saddles, Grazia, always barefooted and always smiling, brought us a stirrup-cup of steaming black coffee. Her head was wrapped up in a quantity of coloured hand-

## THE GATE OF SILVER

kerchiefs, as is the manner of Sardinian peasant women. When we rode away I turned and saw her balancing an empty pitcher on her head, walking down the village street to the well with the brave carriage of a bride.

We were soon deep in a forest of young chestnut trees. Although it was midsummer, the leaves still kept the exquisite virginal green of early spring, and again I marvelled at the surprising symbolism of that colour, which is at once the most innocent and the most vicious of all the colours—so vicious, indeed, that there is a certain shade of it which no woman could wear without hazarding her reputation! Fragments of lilac-hued sky gleamed between the branches. The blue *campanule* which carpeted the ground shone like a reflection. In the woods the wakening day spoke with a myriad voices—the salutation of birds, the stir of insects, the noise of unseen water. It is a wholesome thing to be present at the daily renewal of life. It composes the spirit like a Mass. It assures the mind of the perpetuity and the hidden energies of the earthly order. It restores courage, and also it touches the nerve of adventure. In a forest at dawn there is no telling what the day may bring forth. The sense of wonder is re-born; scales fall from the eyes; familiar things drop their veils and stand in the strangeness of their naked glory. Our present civilisation, which is the civilisation of cities, orders it that



PEASANT GIRLS OF ARITZO





## THE SALUTATION

we shall not wake until the day has become commonplace. But some day, when they have tired of reversing so many natural customs, I think men will again be eager to hear the heart of nature beating at daybreak.

We came out upon a high road, and as we crossed it we met some women, barefooted and scarlet-skirted, carrying large open baskets on their heads. Loaves of bread were in the baskets, and their boots on top of the loaves. They were taking the bread to sell at Desulo, against the feast of St. Peter. "*Baidindi cum Deus*," they cried in their archaic, dog-Latin dialect—Go with God; but when I answered that we had already been with Him all the morning and had seen Him recreate the world, they did not understand.

Passing through Desulo and still climbing upwards, we left the road and the chestnut woods and followed a track that first led us beneath scattered oaks, and finally brought us out on to the great flanks of the mountains. We halted upon a naked summit called *Arcu Bittase*. "*Ecco Gennargentu!*" exclaimed Signore Demonti, suddenly removing from his mouth the long pipe which he had been sucking silently for the last hour. I had always suspected that officialdom slew the soul like a slow poison. The theory seemed to be confirmed by the recollection of many curators and doorkeepers of palaces of art sitting in the midst of so many embodied ecsta-

## THE GATE OF SILVER

sies, soured, unenlightened, all silent and, presumably, all damned. But Signore Demonti must have kept his soul alive. His pipe went out while he gazed with visible rapture upon the Gate of Silver. Perhaps his enthusiasm was inflamed by the pride of ownership, for the valley beneath us was dark with the royal forest of oaks which it was his office to guard—from what perils I have never discovered.

The forest covered only the lower slopes of the valley; above it stretched the bare ribs of the Gennargentu—the principal mountain range of Sardinia. Although they rise to upwards of six thousand feet, the Gennargentu are imposing by their mass rather than by their height. They have less of the energetic character of the Alps than of the broad-bosomed amplitude of giant downs. The sky-line flows with a billowy undulation, the highest point, *La Marmora*, being scarcely distinguishable from half a dozen other crests. In the dry morning air the detail of every swelling and gully was as clear as on a relief map. If we had arrived at the beginning of June, we should have seen the snow still streaking the furrows of the hills with silver; but on Midsummer Day the Gate of Silver is an expanse of grey and green and amber.

There are moments when Sardinia seems to resemble the *mise en scène* of an opera. There nature still preserves that emotional quality which went

## MELODRAMATIC LANDSCAPE

out of fashion with the exhaustion of the romantic movement—a geological disorder that is arresting, but not, like the unromantic Alps, terrific. The landscape of the modern painter is placid and habitable—it shrinks from any unusual energy of the elements, and finds even so unexciting an incident as a rainbow too strained. Our forefathers had a robuster appetite for pictorial sensations. Nature, as they admired it, called out for action of a dramatic, if not of a melodramatic, character. Similarly Sardinia, or rather Barbagia, which is the heart of it, appears to be incomplete without the operatic libretto. The landscape suggests the forced note of the scene-painter's art. The colouring of the sky and the grass and the gloom of the forest are a point too emphatic. All the incidents are a trifle exaggerated. Even in the grouping of the secular oaks there is a hint of the artificiality of the stage *décor*. One finds oneself listening for the opening strains of the overture and attentively watching a studied arrangement of foliage for the entrance of the *prima donna*. Certainly, when we halted in a clearing of the forest, and in response to three blasts of Signore Demonti's horn half a dozen peasants in fancy dress started up out of the ground as if precipitated through a trap-door, the sense of real life grew astonishingly faint. I rapidly arrived at that mood of detached expectancy in which one settles down to witness a play.



## THE GATE OF SILVER

The peasants were ruffianly-looking fellows, with a shaggy growth of hair on their faces, and small, fiery eyes. They were all clad in the *mastruca*, a sleeveless jacket of sheepskin with the wool turned outwards, beneath which was a scarlet tunic, cut open at the breast and the sleeves to display a snowy white shirt. Their Arab-like, white cotton breeches hung loosely about the ankles or were tucked into black cloth leggings. Their headgear was a kind of black Phrygian bonnet, falling like a stocking almost as low as the waist.\* All of them were armed either with axes or guns. They had a curious fashion of carrying the axe, thrusting it underneath the *mastruca* at the back, so that the head protruded just above the collar.

The business of the boundary was broached. Plans were unrolled, and earthy thumbs followed doubtfully the blue and red outlines of the chart. All the gestures were intensely dramatic. Not only the face, but the whole body, took part in the dialogue. The body and the mind appeared to work in unison, emotion passing straight into action, as with children and animals. The pantomime was so explicit that it was possible to follow

\* At first this strange headgear appeared to me to be the one feature of the Barbagian costume that was not designed to meet the practical requirements of a pastoral life; but I was told that its use was to be folded so as to form a pillow at night.





THE BOUNDARY OF THE FOREST, GENNARGENTU



## GRAND OPERA

every turn of the dispute without understanding a word of the dialect in which it was carried on. "Well, I consider I'm being hardly dealt with"—a prodigious shooting out of the lower lip. "No, I don't remember what was settled at the last survey"—a finger laid to the corner of the mouth. "Signore, I speak the truth"—both hands spread out upon the breast. "Ah, young man, you're much mistaken"—a friendly wagging of the forefinger. "Well, since it must be"—the shoulders slid up to the ears. And so we arrived at the business of the signature. Letter by letter the name was scratched out on the parchment, with frequent pauses and sideward glances, as a painter stands back and regards the canvas to assure himself that the work of art is shaping itself in proper form. So unlike was this to the lightning signatures of the stage that the spell of illusion was for a moment broken; but when the ink was dried, not with blotting-paper, but with a sprinkling of sand, I felt reassured that it was not real life, but the opera, after all.

The business of the day being satisfactorily adjusted, preparations were made for the repast. From his capacious saddle-bags Signore Demonti produced a part of the carcase of a sheep. The peasants collected some dry brushwood and kindled a fire. The sheep was spitted upon a long stake and held close alongside the roaring flames. The bottle-shaped wooden casks, which contained

## THE GATE OF SILVER

the sharp wine of Aritzo, were brought from an ice-cold stream where they had been laid to cool. Further searches in the saddle-bags revealed peas and artichokes, goats' milk cheese in bladders, and an uncommon kind of bread, baked in flat, round loaves which contained nothing but air. Soon we were rudely devouring the charred mutton with hasty fingers, for we had tasted nothing all day except Grazia's black coffee at dawn, and it was now past midday. When they were comfortably filled with meat and drink, the peasants and guards stretched themselves upon the greensward. The sun burned fiercely in a sky of pale, glassy blue. The air was still and heavy with the perfume of wild thyme. The only noise was the soothing drone of insects and the munching of the horses as they cropped the rich virgin pasture. The very mountains that rested their giant limbs upon the earth seemed heavy with their immemorial sleep. Life had come to a halt. Even Signore Demonti forgot his mysterious responsibilities. The sombre oaks held out their branches against the sun and rained down the influence of their placid repose upon their sleeping guardian.

When in the cool of the afternoon we descended the breakneck paths which lead to the village of Desulo—unwittingly performing those dizzy feats of horsemanship which the Italian cavalry officers are represented as doing in the cinematograph



## ARRIVAL OF MONSIGNOR

shows—the shadows had already crept half-way up the slopes of the valley. As we stumbled through the precipitous streets I remarked a medley of quilts and bedclothes hanging out of the windows and over the balconies. I supposed that there had been an orgy of washing in the village, but Felipe explained that they were hung out to do honour to Monsignor the Bishop of Oristano, who was to make his processional entry into Desulo that evening. The streets were deserted, for the three thousand souls who inhabit Desulo—heaven alone knows what there is on these barren hills to feed three thousand hungry stomachs—had gone out of the village, man, woman, and child, to welcome Monsignor. We rode down the valley road until we came to a turning where the hill-side slopes down to the highway in a series of rocky terraces. There the women of Desulo, dressed from head to foot in crimson, were massed like a solid bank of human flowers. Their gaze was turned down the valley to a point where the road bends round a shoulder of the hill. A couple of priests dashed past on horseback, as dusty as millers. In the distance we heard a report of fire-arms, and presently little dots of red and white began to appear at a bend of the road. Gradually we discerned the cavalcade of peasants, mounted on their sturdy little mountain horses, who were escorting the bishop to the village. Behind them marched the

## THE GATE OF SILVER

confraternity of the Rosario, white-robed, bearing silk banners figured with faded saints, and twinkling lanterns upon lofty poles. A dense parti-coloured multitude followed after, and out of the voluminous dust came the sonorous chant of *Ave Maria*. Beneath the dust trembled a white silk canopy, and beneath the canopy marched an imposing figure in purple. When the canopy reached the rock where the women were massed the procession came to a halt. A young man with fierce moustache and the soft eyes of a poet was propelled by the surging crowd behind him into the presence of the bishop. When within a foot of Monsignor he discharged a passionate oration at him like a broadside. He had the eloquence of a burning emotion, and it was unfortunate that his action was somewhat impeded by the pressure of the crowd. As he spoke in Sardo, I understood scarcely a word, but Felipe afterwards translated his speech for me as follows :

“ Oh ! Monsignor ! We are making her the most ardent welcome. We are making the welcome to the representative of Gesu Cristo. Oh ! The independencia Barbaracina ! Barbagia was being independent to the Romans. Poi, Barbagia was being independent to the Spaniards. We never had the collar on the neck to nobody. Oh ! But we put the collar on the neck to Holy Church. We wear it with proudness. Poi. When the Genargentu feel the august feet of Monsignor upon



THE CONFRATERNITY OF THE ROSARIO





## THE AMBASSADOR OF HEAVEN

themselves, they are exhilarated. We also are being exhilarated. The heart of Desulo is going to crack. Oh! It is going to crack with proudness. Oh, poi! Because it is making the welcome to the Ambassador of Heaven!"

The heart of Desulo exploded in a mighty "*Evviva!*" the rifles cracked, the horses reared, the birettas whirled in the air, and the celestial ambassador smiled a little wearily. He was a full-fleshed young man, and perspired freely into an episcopal lace handkerchief. He had the lips of an ascetic in the face of an epicure. But it was a face that was schooled to restrain or express any emotion at will. It had attended to the oration with a deprecatory downward cast of the eyes; now, when the jewelled hand was raised in benediction, it shone with a benignity that travelled to the furthest limits of the crowd and tenderly comprehended the women kneeling like drooping flowers among the rocks. Signore Demonti also attempted to kneel, but he was so encumbered with offensive weapons that as soon as he had extricated himself from his gun and sword and pistol and got on to his knees, the multitude was sweeping on again and he was all but ridden down by the impetuous horsemen of Desulo. The canopy bearers shouldered their poles, and the procession, that was now engulfed in the crowd, surged on towards the village. The young men spurred their horses into a fury, and then jerked

## THE GATE OF SILVER

them back on their haunches ; the incessant discharge of rifles and pistols and fowling-pieces was as deafening as a battle ; the children screamed like parakeets ; and high over the dusty pandemonium was the clangour of the bells in the church tower, shrill and terrible, like old men's laughter.

In all this there was something that was unequivocally pagan. In Barbagia, as in all places where the observances of the Church arouse an almost savage ardour, Christianity has the shallowest root. The spiritual fermentation springs from a vastly older faith—if that can be called faith which is as spontaneous and undetermined as instinct. Christianity is the mould which gives a definite form to the primeval emotions, but any other mould would do as well. The advent of the bishop was not the cause, but merely the occasion of the unloosing of so much delirium. Little did he guess, the pale-faced, diplomatic young man, as his gloved hand caressed the crowd with airy benedictions, that his advent had awaked the echo of ancestral voices and unloosed the ecstasy that had once been inflamed by Baal and Astarte and Allah.

“ There is all Africa and her prodigies in us,” said Thomas Browne. Perhaps the last two or three hundred years have done much to circumscribe this incalculable continent of the human heart ; but there is and will always remain a corner of it which is the seed-bed of passion and

## THE CENTRAL FIRE

unreason. Because of it the improbable has always happened. Out of it have proceeded all saturnalias and revolutions, all poetry and religion, all that divine disorder in the throes of which the world is from age to age re-born. The extent of it in any man or any people is the thing I most care to know about them. All other qualities are merely furrows upon the surface; but this central fire is the maker and unmaker of civilisations. In this twilit valley of Barbagia a momentary flame shot up out of the volcano over which all our social order is built. It flashed harmlessly enough, but it was not without its vivid suggestiveness. I said that the landscape seemed to call for dramatic action—to-night it did not call in vain. The mountains shone with that bright velvet gloom of sunset which excites the eye more than vibrating colours. The shadows flooded up the valley and overtook the tumult of men and horses pouring into the village. In the midst of the cloudy pillar of dust the unsteady lanterns flickered and the discharges of the guns made little spurts of flame. Beneath the lessening din there sounded, like the bourdon note of an organ, the grievous undertone—*miserere nobis, peccadores*.

\* \* \*

Desulo, like almost all the desolate villages of Barbagia, has the unpremeditated beauty of an



## THE GATE OF SILVER

animal's lair. It suggests the deftness, the instinctive rather than the reasoned construction of the swallow's nest or the beaver's hut. It is split up into four separate clusters, each of which clings limpet-like to the steep slope of the valley. Seen from above, each cluster has the tiny compactness and isolation of a bee-hive. The houses are rough and slatternly, built of a brown stone which age darkens to the colour of smoke. The tiles are either of a dull red clay or grey worm-eaten wood. Over the streets and yards hang rotting wooden balconies, so frail that it seems as if the slightest footfall must shatter them. The streets are dark, narrow, twisted, furtive, precipitous as the mountain-side on which they are built. There is something violent, almost tragic, in the aspect of the place. It covers beneath the shadow of the mountain, upon the verge of the woods, comfortless, insecure, invaded, as it were, by the fear of the wild.

Night in Desulo has all those terrors which it is the business of a human habitation to dispel. The influence of the mountains and the forests is palpable in the darkness. When the dark falls, the noise of talk and quarrelling which fills the streets all day is silenced as suddenly as when the approach of a hawk hushes the chattering of sparrows. I never once heard the echo of laughter or of song. The only memory that I have of the long nights of Desulo is that of black streets be-





CHILDREN OF DESULO



## THE WIDOW

neath starlit skies, of bare, shadowy rooms lit by a faintly glowing brazier, and round it a group of silent figures squatting Arab-like on their haunches, of a woman standing motionless upon a crazy balcony and gazing, for the space of hours it seemed, into the inky darkness.

There is a tragic figure which one sees in all Sardinian villages—the widow. She belongs to a race apart. She wears the habit of mourning all her life. Dressed from head to foot in black, she walks among the troops of women and girls in their gay scarlet costumes like a perpetual emblem of death. She appears to be without friends; she is shunned as though she were a felon. I suppose she has a home, but usually she haunts the streets. She sits all day in the corners of deserted yards, moving into the shade when the sun burns hotly at midday, and creeping into the light at evening. Her face rarely wears the expression either of sorrow or despair, but only the blankness of one for whom there is no future. Generally she is old, terribly old, almost dehumanised by the frightful dishonour of age. I remember one who sat all day on a balcony of a dilapidated courtyard. She had the face of a ghoul—greenish skin stretched tightly over a framework of bones, and red sores where the eyes should have been. She squatted like an idol, moving only to twirl the spindle which she let drop from the balcony and then jerked up again

## THE GATE OF SILVER

with a regular, mechanical action. All day her posture remained the same, until evening overtook her in her abandonment—still counting out her residue of time by the rhythm of the falling flax.

Desulo would be a very sad little village without the women. Their gay clothing gives the town the appearance of being perpetually *en fête*. The primary colours are primary in a double sense, for unquestionably they have a wholly irresistible attraction for primitive peoples. The costumes of Barbagia differ in every village, but the component colours are always red and blue and yellow. In Desulo the foundation of the dress is a rather sombre blood-red, the bodice is bright with dashes of embroidery, the sleeves are striped with blue and yellow. The apron has a wide border of blue or scarlet; but if the woman or the girl has lost her parents, she wears a purple border for the rest of her life. On all occasions of ceremony—Sundays, feasts, weddings, and the like—a kind of black cowl is worn, which falls to the waist. Drawn low over the brows, quite hiding the hair, it gives a solemn and almost tragic aspect to these dark faces which have all the sad beauty of the East. Something of the East, too, they have in their blood, for these Barbaracini are sprung from an Arab tribe which penetrated into the heart of Sardinia more than a thousand years ago, and were left stranded



## THE BEAUTY OF WOMEN

there when the tide of invasion ebbed back again to Africa.

I have never quite been able to understand that strange association of beauty with sorrow. In almost all deeply beautiful faces there is the hint of a shadow. Perhaps it is the shadow that makes the beauty. But not only faces, but also scenes that are heavy with beauty—trees standing beside still water, ancient buildings in the open places of a wood, all objects that are made beautiful by sunset and moonlight—have the fatal gift of sadness. Is it the briefness of beauty's season of efflorescence, its feebleness to withstand decay, that brings the sense of tears? Certainly the beauty of southern and eastern women is as much more poignant than that of any other as its duration is more brief. Perhaps it is a knowledge of the shortness of their spring and of the bitter length of the inevitable winter that casts a shadow over the faces of the women of Desulo. Their beauty has also a little of the enchantment which beauty borrows from a suggestion of mystery. They are inscrutable and sphinx-like to a degree that is perplexing to one who has been accustomed to the faces of the city-bred peoples, which are usually as legible as a newspaper and as empty of mystery. Their features are unrelaxed, like those of a mask, yet the swift passing of a light or shadow gives the hint of deeps of passion—incalculable, dangerous, explosive.

## THE GATE OF SILVER

The art of walking with grace is in England an almost unknown distinction ; but every woman who wishes to learn it should go to Desulo. I doubt, however, whether by mere observation she could school herself to the careful and measured motion of the women of Desulo. Probably it is the menial task of carrying burdens on their heads up and down the perilous declivities of their village streets that has given them the gait of queens. They hold their bodies erectly, without stiffness ; the legs swing evenly from the hips with a long, secure stride ; the feet are planted firmly yet lightly, heel and toe all at once. They have all the qualities which delight the eye in the motion of a wild animal—the alertness, the unconscious pride, the free play of muscle, the hint of reserves of strength. Moreover, in Desulo—I do not know that it is true of other villages—they combine this natural grace with a curious hieratical attitude—arms folded across the breast and hands clasping the elbows—in which, I think, is a memory of long-forgotten rites. On the feast of St. Peter, at the summons of the church bell, all the women climbed up to the little forest church above the village, and as I saw them passing one by one across the grassy clearing of the woods with this solemn, gliding motion, it seemed as if the marble breed of women on a Grecian urn had suddenly taken body and life.

\*

\*

\*



GOING TO MASS, DESULO





## THE FESTA OF SAN PIETRO

The feast of St. Peter took place a few days after the entry of the bishop into the village. The church of St. Peter is a forlorn little structure with a whitewashed façade, standing in the solitude of the woods. It contains nothing more valuable than an oleograph portrait of the saint and a painted plaster image which represents the chief of the apostles as a comical, round-shouldered little old man with the gleeful here-we-are-again expression of a Jack-in-the-box figure. All through the long, sunny morning the women had been kneeling in the crowded church and in the shelterless glare of the grass-grown piazza. Towards evening the saint was mounted on a couple of poles and taken to breathe the thyme-scented air of the woods. All day wines and liqueurs were to be had for the asking, and it was a triumphing procession that wound unsteadily through the woods, calling out to the apathetic oaks for mercy, now and at the hour of death, amen.

After the procession the priest invited me to go with him and call upon the *padrone della festa*. The patron of the feast is commonly a robber—not, of course, a man that has demeaned himself by any pitiful act of petty larceny, but one who has achieved a place in the criminal hierarchy by one of those desperate adventures of brigandage or cattle-raiding which prove a man's worth and give him a kind of rank and esteem in Barbagia, as once they did upon the Scottish border. As,

## THE GATE OF SILVER

however, it is expedient to pursue one's spiritual equally with one's temporal welfare, the misdemeanant usually consents to become the patron and to bear the expenses of a *festa*, thus by an outlay of thirty or forty *lire* insuring the risks of damage to his soul.

We entered a large, low-ceiled room, paved with brick. Everything was handsomely appointed and in order. Two shining copper bowls for making bread stood near the fire, a gigantic wooden spit hung from the wall, red and white wine were set upon the table, a copper coffee-pot steamed upon the hearth. The *padrone* and his sons were seated ceremoniously on chairs ranged along the wall.

“*Laudadu siada Zesu Gristo!*—May Jesus Christ be praised!”—he said gravely as he rose to meet us.

“*Semper siada laudadu!*” we replied, “May He be praised for ever!” The conversation was in Sardo. For my part, I was taken up with admiration of the patron and his four sons. Their dress had a rich and barbaric splendour. The sheepskin had a curled black fleece of the finest gloss; the *giubbone*, or short jacket, was of flame-like vermilion; the vest of crimson velvet, with bars of golden embroidery; the white shirt fastened at the throat with jewelled buttons. The men were nearly perfect specimens of the human animal—erect, defiant, all muscle, blood, and bone, a



HEARING MASS OUTSIDE THE CHURCH OF SAN PIETRO





## THE PATRON-ROBBER

hidden energy plainly perceptible in every line of their statuesque repose. The face of the patron, although he had barely crossed the threshold of middle age, was of the patriarchal type. It was the face of a man who had lived strongly and violently, who had hated, fought, commanded, plotted, perhaps had loved, but never had feared or pitied. It was the legible writing of a mind full of what may be called the lore of life—that stock of human wisdom which is not consciously acquired, but grows like a natural growth. Long contact with nature and with men who were as ruthless and cunning as nature had taught him many secrets. He knew all the rude and eternal truths as men knew them before life became confused by a multitude of trifles. He had seen things nakedly which our civilisation covers up. His face, therefore, was graver than those of men who only see life between the two sides of a street, yet not, as theirs are, perplexed. It was assured, reliant, almost serene. His sons were like him—bronzed, deep-eyed, with features cut like a cameo. There was the same quiet confidence in their expression, but mixed with a kind of anticipating wonder—clearly they had not yet passed through that fire in which passion is transmuted into experience.

The conversation, which had for some time been maintained a little uneasily between the priest and the robber-patron, soon lapsed altogether, and we sat in the darkening room in

## THE GATE OF SILVER

silence. There was no embarrassment, however, but rather the sense of repose which accompanies the performance of a piece of ritual. Silence is no restraint to men of this breed. It is their natural atmosphere, as talk is the natural atmosphere of men in towns. But when they speak, it is not to repeat a phrase they have read in the newspaper, but to say the things they have felt rather than thought in the silent days and nights upon the mountains. What conception of life, I wondered, lay behind those sombre eyes? The spirit of men is principally formed and coloured by what their eyes look out on to. The things which these shepherds had seen had been for the most part silent, enduring, unchanging things—the bare breast of the mountains, the shadow of forests, the darkness of torrent-cleft valleys, the birth of flaming dawns, the wise, instinctive ways of beasts. All the summer they lived in branch-built huts among the mountains, by day lying beneath the sheltering arms of the oak trees, at night sleeping among the quiet cattle. In the winter there was the bare comfort of dark rooms and the glowing brazier. At intervals this sober rhythm of life was broken by moments when the smouldering fires of the heart shot out into flame—the Homeric orgies of the *fiesta*, the wild torch-lit nights of drinking, dancing, and song, the sudden frenzies, as upon the evening when the Bishop of Oristano made his entry into Desulo.

## XII

### THE FESTA OF SAN COSTANTINO

IN general, the railway stations of Sardinia are as desolate as its mountains. Perhaps more so, for they have that utter desolation of inflexible order which is even more oppressive than the desolation of waste and savage places. The blank block-house is the severest prose of architecture ; the glittering lines stretching infinitely up and down forbid the eye to digress into the landscape. A lizard basks on the burning stretch of concrete ; a family of persistent grasshoppers makes baffled attempts to ascend the dazzling walls of the station-house ; a few bees buzz round the bung-hole of a cask of sweet wine ; a wine-bemused peasant sleeps in the waiting-room. At rare intervals a train arrives and falls under the soporific influence of the place. Apparently it halts for no other reason than to allow the employees of the train to converse with the employees of the station. When the conversation flags, an official surveys the long perspective of blistering carriages, hastens the departure of imaginary passengers with a cry of *Alla vettura*, and sounds a



## THE FESTA OF SAN COSTANTINO

wailful note upon a horn. The engine responds with a startled exclamation, like a man prematurely awaked out of sleep, creeps off down the line, and the station resumes its sun-stupefied *siesta*.

When we drew up at the station of Abbasanta, however, on the morning of the fifth of July, it was clear that something unusual was toward. The platform was packed with a seething motley throng of peasants. Most of them were encumbered with bundles of clothing, food, and household goods, as if in flight. A similar crowd was packed into the train, or rather, as we steamed into Abbasanta, extruding from the windows of it. The mob on the platform welcomed the mob in the train with a cheer, and seethed more violently to make room for it. There was a stampede to the exit doors. In the road outside the station were drawn up some sixty or seventy long two-wheeled carts, covered with tunnel-like awnings, some drawn by bullocks, some by horses. The bridles of the horses were gay with red-and-blue woollen tassels, flashing with little mirrors, and noisy with bells. The crowd roared, laughed, quarrelled, and fought as it surged round the carts. Little by little it was swallowed up by the dark-tunnelled awnings, and at last the populous city upon wheels got into motion. In a swirl of dust and amid a tempest of cries the carts raced down the six miles of slanting road into the valley





ON THE WAY TO THE FESTA



## A LODGING FOR THE NIGHT

of the Siddu, crossed the river, and crawled tediously up the opposite slope to the little village of Sedilo.

Sedilo has not the huddled character of a mountain village. Its line of one-storied cottages straggles over half a mile or more of road. Having no beauty to display or wares to sell, it possesses no inn. But now it was suddenly called upon to house a surplus population of six or seven thousand souls. Most of them, it was true, were well enough content to sleep beneath the starry rafters of the sky, but some—prosperous *borghesi* of Sassari, Sennori, and Oristano—had forgotten the ancestral way and learned the timidity of towns. Of these I perforce was one, knowing none in all this crowd of whom I could ask the shelter of a cart or the corner of a rug.

I followed a company of peasants to a house that looked more substantial than the rest in quest of sleeping room. At the door stood a fierce beldam of a woman, short-skirted, bare-legged, arms akimbo, in whose face a great beauty had been at civil war with all the ills of life and had been sadly worsted in the encounter. She led the way into a large room, dark and bare, which might have been a stable. It had an earthen floor, and upon the floor were strewn the sleeping forms of four-and-twenty men and women, not counting dogs and children. Along a narrow passage between the prostrate bodies the horses from the

## THE FESTA OF SAN COSTANTINO

carts picked their way to the stable at the further end. The woman threw a contemptuous glance over the corpse-like figures, as if surveying the slaughter of her own hands, and ejaculated—*Republicani di Sennori*. A peasant woman who was suckling a baby appeared to resent the stigma, and exclaimed, *No, non siamo repubblicani, siamo buoni catolici*. Then began a political-theological wrangle as to whether it was possible to be at the same time a republican and a good Catholic, which became so embittered that it threatened to awaken the four-and-twenty sleepers of Sennori. I cut short the dispute by asking whether room could be made for yet another sleeper. It appeared that it could, provided that the sleeper could disburse five *lire*. The accommodation seemed barely to warrant the charge. I remonstrated, and was told that if I didn't like it I could sleep in a ditch and chance getting malaria. Misliking the alternative, I submitted to the one and only extortion that I met with in Sardinia, and closed with the bargain. The charge was for sleeping only. When I suggested the indispensability of food, the virago replied that she had none, and that if she had she couldn't serve it, with no room for the soles of her feet to rest on.

But in Sardinia neighbourliness does not wait upon etiquette. If you enter a town a stranger at sunset, you are like enough to be embarrassed by new-made friends before bed-time. I was not



## A LITERARY HOST

in the least surprised, therefore, to find one of these confidential strangers pull me by the arm and draw me out of the house. My conductor led me down the village street to a ruinous structure which he signed to me to enter. As it was inhabited by a mare and a foal, some dogs, a brood or two of chickens, I concluded that his wish was to entertain me by an inspection of his stable. Afterwards, on observing a table propped up with bricks, two stools, and a coloured print of a Norddeutscher-Lloyd steamship full steam upon the Prussian-blue high seas, I decided that the place was his home. The man went to the corner of the room and kicked a bundle of rags. The rags stirred, shaped themselves, and stood up in the image of a woman. It took long to convince her that food was wanted, but once persuaded, she fetched some sticks, kindled a bonfire in the middle of the room, and quickly fried a dish of eggs. My host was strangely incommunicative. For some minutes he watched me eat with close attention ; then he stormed up and down the room, addressing to the mare, the foal, and the dogs a fervent and eloquent oration, in which there was a frequent repetition of the names of Costantino, Carlo Magno, Orlando, and other heroes of high romance. When I asked him his occupation, he said that he wrote. There was little of authorship about him except the poverty ; but he refused to amplify his confession, replying

## THE FESTA OF SAN COSTANTINO

evasively to my cross-questioning by drinking my health, to the certain detriment of his own, in a black, bitter, and poisonous wine.

It is half an hour's walk down a steep, stony lane from Sedilo to the church of San Costantino, around which the *festa* is held. This short passage offered as sharp a spectacle of human suffering as any circle of Dante's inferno. Along the sides of the lane all the abjects of Sardinia were gathered together—men and women exhibiting all the deformities and deficiencies of their bodies naked to the general view. Those who had knees knelt on them; those who had hands stretched them out importunately, with a rosary wound round the fingers; all had tongues, and intoned an unceasing litany of sorrow—*Caridad e compassion, buona gente, caridad e compassion*. They demanded alms rather than begged them. There was a note of defiance and command in their importunity. They seemed to fix upon you a personal responsibility for the world's and nature's injustice, and called upon you by San Costantino and all the hierarchy of heaven to right it. They arrested you by the wrist and by the ankle. They constrained you by their eye to be attentive to the tale of their woes, as the Ancient Mariner constrained the Wedding Guest. Not until you had brutally beaten them off did their manner soften, and then, sympathetically, they wished you *Buona festa*—a delicate shaft of reproach which

## A PRIMITIVE EMPORIUM

quivered in the tender parts of the conscience more painfully than any imprecation.

The church of San Costantino stands upon the steep slope of a hill. On the side where the ground falls away to the valley it is defended by a double wall like a fortress. The first enclosure, which is entered by two arched gateways, is a level space of several acres ; from this a steep path ascends to the little platform in front of the church. Standing upon this terrace, one looks down as from the walls of a castle upon the crowded space below and away over the wide valley of the Tirso, with the silver, serpent-like folds of the river shining in the midst of an expanse of sombre grey and brown.

The lower enclosure had now become half camp, half market ; at one end were lines of hooded wagons, among which were horses, dogs, children, fires, cooking-utensils, and all the impedimenta of camp life. Between the arched entrance and the ascent to the church there were little streets formed of booths. Here you could buy cloth, boots, lace, sheep-bells, leather waistcoats, water-bottles, wine, oranges, *torroni*, tin coffee-pots, meat, knives, sickles—everything, in fact, that the Sardinian peasant had ever heard or dreamed of. Here were the succulent oranges and exquisite *vernaccia* of Oristano ; the wines of Ogliastro and Oliena ; smoked fish from Bosa ; great blocks of *torroni* from Tonara melting in the



## THE FESTA OF SAN COSTANTINO

sun ; *aranciata*, a candy made of the peel of oranges ; *garapigna*, a sweet and scented variety of ice-cream ; and the thin, large loaves of bread known from its shape as *carta di musica*. Here also was all the fun of the fair. Here were the cardsharppers who tempted you with a doubtful-looking five-lira piece to " find the lady " ; here was a primitive roulette-table at which you gambled for centesimi at the disadvantageous odds of thirty to one against ; and here was another revolving table upon which you might cast five centesimi and leave fate to decide whether the prize should be a mouth-organ or a brooch set with coloured glass. At the entrance to one booth two knights in armour were gibbeted, and a showman invited you to walk up and see the marionette show. At another a lady in rose-coloured tights and a green plush huntsman's coat beguiled you with an invitation to see her dance upon the tight-rope—for the *festa* of San Costantino has fallen somewhat from its primitive simplicity.

The insignificant image of San Costantino is still, however, the magnet that draws half the province of Sassari to this desolate hill-side. Every reveller is half a pilgrim. His first duty is to pay his homage to the saint. I stood among the shifting crowd on the little piazza in front of the church and watched the peasants arriving in companies and families. Very many rode up on horseback—sometimes a whole family on a



## THE SPIRIT OF PLACES

aspect. The working is subtler than that. I conceive that places which men have long inhabited, where their life has been intense and passionate and continuous for hundreds or thousands of years, are so saturated with human emotions that for long after the original agents have disappeared from the scene it is impossible to live in them or even to pass through them without being to some extent affected by the human spirit which they have absorbed. I think that not a little of the secret trouble which from time to time may fall upon you in strange places is due to these silent communications. Places, no less than men, are haunted by their past. There are many scenes of crime, not naturally repellent, which long after the event impart an adumbration of the horror they have seen enacted. There is a palpable influence in many churches that is exuded by stones impregnated by prayer. And there are many landscapes which have oppressed me with an indefinable sense of evil even before I discovered among their rocks those long stone tables which once were wet with the blood of human sacrifices. The truth is that inanimate objects are much less inanimate than we suppose. I cannot but believe that those triumphs and tragedies in which the soul of a people is deeply involved do not leave the spirit of places altogether untouched.

The degree of affection or dislike which certain towns arouse within us seems to me to depend

## THE BURIED CITY

less on their natural beauty or ugliness than on the quality of the human emotions whose tides have ebbed and flowed within them. To what else can you attribute those intimations of sympathy or antipathy which you frequently experience even when you enter a town at night and cannot at all discern its features? They are not dependent upon any physical reaction. They are formed upon the reports of that army of skirmishers which the spirit of a man sends out when he enters an unknown region, which warn him of the nearness of a friendly or hostile presence long before the inner sentinels of the senses bring in their more detailed messages. It is useless to demand a reason for the aversions and preferences of these spiritual monitors, but it is best for your peace of mind not to disregard their admonitions. I know that I hated Sinis more passionately than I ever hated any place before; but I should not know how to justify the hatred except by reference to this supreme and arbitrary authority, to which I have long since resigned the choice of my acquaintance among cities and places. I can only, therefore, record the impressions of a day during which I was ill at ease.

\* \* \*

Sardinia is as surprising in its physical as in its racial contrasts. In six hours the toy train crawls down the branch railway from the highlands of

## ORISTANO

Nuoro to the lowland of Oristano—that is to say, from the Switzerland to the Holland of Sardinia, or rather to I know not what mud-flats of Asia or Africa, for the character of Sinis is not European, but almost wholly Oriental. Sinis is the delta region at the mouth of Sardinia's principal river, the Tirso; and, like many other deltas, it has the luxuriance of life which seems to be bred not of health, but of corruption.

I have not a word to say against Oristano, the capital of this region. It is true that the Sardinian proverb says, *Chi va ad Oristano resta ad Oristano*, meaning that you take up your last quarters in the cypress-shaded cemetery. It is one of the worst hotbeds of malaria in the island. The stagnant lakes in which it abounds are prolific breeding-places of mosquitoes. You will find the doors and windows of your room at the *albergo* wired like a meat-safe, in order that you may be protected from the terror that flies by night. Apart from devising stratagems against flies and mosquitoes, there is little to do at Oristano. Sitting outside a café in the Piazza del Mercato and watching the groups of citizens yawning in the sun, I asked an inhabitant what was the principal diversion of the town. He spread out both his hands in an abrupt half circle which comprised the whole of the square. *Questo!* he remarked complacently—a simplification of the science of pleasure which to my



## THE BURIED CITY

mind seemed to denote no inconsiderable degree of culture.

Oristano is one of those cities in which one might well expect the melancholy fit to fall. It is full of the symbols of decay. In point of age it is more juvenile than most Sardinian towns, for it has not yet celebrated its thousandth birthday. But then, it had the misfortune to be born old. When the ancient Roman city of Tharros on the coast succumbed to the onslaughts of the Saracens in the eleventh century, the populace made one of those sudden resolutions which seem to have come so easily to the citizens of the Middle Ages, and transferred their city bodily ten miles further inland. Out of the ruins of Tharros, Oristano was born. Fragments of the older town were utilised in its construction. You can still see the ruins of the mud and rubble walls dovetailed among its houses, and relics of arches and columns imbedded like fossils in its slums. Its stones are full of the memory of Eleonora, the Sardinian Jeanne d'Arc, who broke the power of the Spaniards. Its cathedral is an unremarkable eighteenth-century edifice; but the admirable campanile, with its cupola of green and copper-coloured tiles, manages to convey a hint of Byzantium. Perhaps it was because I came straight down to Oristano after wandering among the wild villages of Barga that, in spite of its puny population of eight thousand souls, it seemed to me to have so sur-



## A SINISTER COUNTRY

prisingly much of the suavity and amenity of a city. For some reason which I cannot explain the undramatic play that was enacted all day upon the broad market-place, with the four-square, medieval tower of San Cristoforo for a background, was no less diverting to me than to the citizen to whom it afforded all his meed of pleasure.

But Oristano was like a friendly town in the midst of a hostile country. I had no sooner left its walls than I became aware of a sinister influence. I walked along a sombre avenue as obscure as a cathedral aisle until I came to a stone bridge spanning the Tirso. The Tirso is the longest river in Sardinia, and has its birth in the pure mountain torrents of Barbagia, but it did not rush to meet the embrace of the sea with the freshness and freedom which a mountain river should have. The plain seemed to have corrupted it; it slunk between the piers of the bridge in a brown, turgid flood, noiseless and odoriferous. Having gained the open country, the road ran between two fences of contorted cactus—surely it is the cactus rather than the mandrake which should groan when it is uprooted—overtopped by a growth of giant geranium, flaunting a perfectly sin-like scarlet. Twice it passed through deserted villages, but without losing anything of its unnecessary breadth, for it was broad as the road that leads to destruction.

## THE BURIED CITY

The houses that flanked it were ignoble, very low, and built of mud bricks. Once, over the cactus hedge, I saw a church standing isolated among the fields. It had a minaret-like tower which most strangely recalled both Holland and Africa. The bells began to ring with a kind of cracked and mocking revelry. I waited and watched. They ceased, and I was scarcely surprised that no worshippers answered their summons. The air was so still that I fancied I could hear the empty nave echo to the mutter of the lonely priest. As the walls gleamed in the yellowish light, it seemed to be the very chapel of Blake's vision—"the chapel all of gold, that none did dare to enter in."

It was Sunday morning, but a little further on I came across some peasants baking mud bricks and others reaping the corn. They were plucking it with their fingers, stalk by stalk. If they had cut it with a sickle or a scythe they would have reaped a harvest of thistles and poppies.

At Cabras the road runs abruptly into a wide lagoon. The village lies upon the shore, but quite unrefreshed by the nearness of the water. I never saw a village, even in the midst of a plain, so desolate in aspect, so choked and parched with heat, reflecting such a hatefully metallic light. I found the market-place black with men. They were of a type that I had seen nowhere else in the island, and wore a peculiar costume the peculiarity of

## CABRAS

which was the scantiness of it. They were bare from the feet to the middle of the thigh, for the sea and the shallow lagoons are so much their native element that it is never worth their while to dress as landsmen. While the men were standing ankle-deep in the dust, as insensible to the withering heat as lizards, the women were sitting in the cool of the church. They squatted cross-legged on the floor of the nave, blackening the marble pavement from the door to the altar-steps. The company was as sadly dressed as at a Quakers' meeting; nowhere was there a note of the gay colouring of the south. They were shrouded in sombre shawls, shading from russet to rusty black, which covered their heads and half their faces like veils. Lean dogs ran in and out among the seated figures; swarthy naked children crawled about like reptiles; an aged priest murmured at the altar, and throughout the church sounded the mild hum of a *conversazione*. The conversation and the elaborate business at the altar ceased simultaneously, the women went out into the glare of the piazza, holding their veils across their mouths, and walked swiftly and silently to their homes.

The little waves of the *stagno* almost washed the walls of the church. The water was the colour of clay tinged with blood, but round the edges it shone with all the beautiful, unseemly colours of putrescence. A slight breeze agitated it into



## THE BURIED CITY

ripples and brought the warm breath of decay to the nostrils. Near to the shore some worn-out horses stood up to their bellies in the oily water, with their fore-legs tied closely together. Naked urchins, as brown as the red mud, splashed about in the water and threw stones at them. Each time that they were hit they gave a jerky leap forward. A ruined tower on the shore of the lake and a stretch of low hills on the horizon were the only incidents in the flat and featureless landscape.

In this afternoon of distressing heat and in this country of desolate, limitless expanse, I made a discovery which very likely you have already made. I discovered that all those qualities that go to make up the charm of the South—I do not mean the tropical, but the European South—may too easily be carried to a point at which they become horrible. There is not a single one of those incidents which make the life of southern countries so pleasurable to look on at that may not be exaggerated and distorted into a means of pain. All that casualness of living, all those circumstances of disorder, which to the traveller newly arrived from countries with business habits are as refreshing as the folly of children after the staid ways of grown-up people, at a certain well-defined point pass from beauty to outrageous squalor. The squalor remains when the trick of the picturesque has ceased to deceive the eye.



## HATEFULNESS OF THE SOUTH

The inimitable southern gesture is essentially the grace of the animal ; at first one forgets the basis of animality which it presumes ; but one day it becomes too explicit, and one thirsts for the grace of the spirit. The gladdening southern light is capable of an intensity that grips the soul with melancholy more fatally than the gloom of the North. Sooner or later in the experience of every northerner who lives in a southern latitude there comes a moment when he cannot help crying out, "Hateful is the dark blue sky vaulted o'er the dark blue sea." The grateful southern heat can torture the body as well as comfort it. The eye wearies of the riot of colour, and searches in vain for cool and temperate tones. And that perpetual charm of Mediterranean countries, the sense of the encompassing past, may become suddenly so acute that the mind revolts against the tyranny of everything that is olden, and hates the untimely reminder that the end of strength is weakness, and of beauty decay. The beauty of the South is not assured and indestructible like that of a Greek statue ; it depends upon the conjunction of felicitous circumstances ; it is like the smile of a woman whose heart is sere. It is a mask, and I shall never again be quite secure against a misgiving that the mask may at any instant drop and disclose those features, as I saw them at Cabras, which are neither fresh nor kindly nor happy.

## THE BURIED CITY

I pushed further on into the heart of this forlorn country, making for the finger of land pointing out into the sea, at the extremity of which is the site of the ancient Tharros. The road ran along the shores of the stagnant lake of Cabras and then lost itself in a maze of sandy, weed-grown tracks. To the right and left parched crops were struggling for existence with the choking weeds. Just over the ears of the corn the air trembled as it trembles over a lime-kiln. The rank grass swarmed and hummed with life. Monstrous grasshoppers skirmished before my feet, making a continuous rustling, as of silk dresses, among the dry herbage. Emerald-backed lizards paused listening, and then flashed across the path, seeming even more bejewelled and fantastic than their gorgeous imitations in the jewellers' shops. Majestic dragon-flies whirred after their prey. The sun flashed upon the beautiful iridescence of all those insects that feed upon corruption. A myriad forms of life were busy upon their infinitesimal activities, yet it was a life which impressed one as being monstrous, exotic, and in some inexplicable way corrupt.

At length I reached the narrow peninsula that terminates in the Capo S. Marco. Here as a fitting epilogue to this dead region stood a Byzantine basilica, grey, ruinous, and forlorn, in a waste of sand. Its doors and windows were blocked up, its white dome battered and shapeless. It wore

## THARROS

the aspect of uttermost age, yet it was the latest work of man that stood beside this desolate shore. It had been run up in the eighth century; the builders, to save themselves pains, had utilised the bricks and columns of the Roman town hard by. A little further on was the quarry which had supplied the material for its construction, the debris of ancient Tharros. Little remained of this proud city, which once measured four miles in circumference. Time had dismantled its buildings, but had been unable to loosen the granite-like mortar which still bound the thin Roman bricks together. The drifting sand had half buried the broken masses of masonry, but the lines of the paved streets and the ruts worn by the chariot wheels were still faintly discernible. As I strolled along the beach I was astounded to find it strewn with fragments of Roman pottery. At every step one trod upon bricks, tiles, arms and mouths of amphoræ, morsels of jars and pitchers of every shape and texture—nothing un mutilated, but everything suggesting design and beauty.

I picked up a piece of terra-cotta, the use of which I could only conjecture; it might have been a portion of a frieze or of the cornice of a wall. It was crudely decorated with a series of shallow impressions, obviously made by printing the thumb upon the wet clay. Underneath was a row of double indentations, the prints of the first



## THE BURIED CITY

and second fingers. These signatures of the Roman workman were as fresh as if they had been made only yesterday. It was plain that the nails had been long and sharp, that of the second finger broken. The thing was rude and insignificant, worthless from the antiquarian's point of view ; yet it had a magic in it. It was more eloquent than the most moving page of Gibbon. It had the thrill of the spoken word. It reconstructed a city on these weed-grown sands, populated it with men, snapshotted, as it were, one of those trivial incidents which form nine-tenths of human life—the nine-tenths which history ignores—such as the breaking of a finger-nail. For it is the trifles and minutiae of a buried civilisation that abridge the centuries and enable us to touch hands with the past.

But I had not yet reached the end of the promontory nor progressed far enough down the avenue of the centuries. On the Mediterranean shores, where the writing is still legible, the tale is usually the same : before Rome—Greece, Carthage, and Phœnicia. When your imagination has carried you back as far as it conveniently can, and out of school-day memories and the mind's jetsam of classical lore you have attempted to reconstruct and repeople a past civilisation, you find that you have to set out on a further journey to more unknown and alien regions. Of Greece and Rome we can form a coherent if not an exact



## CHANGE AND DECAY

account ; but of that mysterious race which set out from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon to explore the world, feeling its way from headland to headland round the shores of the Mediterranean, like a blind man groping round a room, our images are fantastic and confused. The very name of Tharros, tradition says, derives from a woman of Phœnicia, the wife of a king. The cliff which descends abruptly at the end of the promontory is honeycombed with the tombs of the Carthaginian colonists. This deep-hewn necropolis was once a mine of gold and precious stones, but the modern antiquary has completed the work of spoliation that the Saracen began a thousand years ago. Time and tempest have split open the rocks and broken in upon the repose of princes. The wind whistles among the once subterranean chambers, and the narrow doorways through which the corpses were carried to their airless tombs now form broken casements looking out on to the changing sapphire of the sea. Sand and dust have half-choked the massive sarcophagi which once enshrined bracelets and necklets, rings and earrings, and the gold fillets that bound the foreheads of the priestesses of Baal.

At Tharros the burden of the past became insupportable. When it is desiccated, ticketed, boxed in a museum, the past is merely curious, never terrible. Objects uprooted from their natural soil lose their spell ; they may exercise the

## THE BURIED CITY

mind's ingenuity, but they leave the emotions cold. The museum atmosphere dries up the source of tears. At Tharros scarcely anything that you can take account of remains ; it is the emptiness and desolation of the scene that evokes so keen a sense of the destructive and remorseless working of time. Upon the blank background the imagination flashes pictures of the vivid life once lived within this little space—the quays thronged with crowds when the galleys came in from Carthage bringing news of the latest victories of Hannibal ; the narrow, noisy streets, through which the oxen dragged the solid-wheeled carts laden with corn for the granaries of Rome ; the procession of women moving erectly with amphoræ on their heads as they went night and morning to the well which you can still find in the waste of sand ; the great temple of the Egyptians, the destruction of which Anthony, a native of Tharros, lamented in the ninth century, the Roman temple of Minerva, the forum, and the amphitheatre. Now the place is a desert, and the only sounds that interrupt the deathly silence are the cries of the gulls as they fly over the empty tombs. The scene gave rise to a sense of despair—that most poisonous despair which whispers an assurance of the futility of all human effort. It evoked a vision of destiny as the sad mistress of men and gods alike, quietly alert, infinitely patient, foreseeing the ruin of everything that is

## YOUTH AND THE SEA

laboriously built up, dooming the activity of ages to sterility, secure in her ultimate triumph. In this corner of the world her triumph was already achieved. From here she would push her conquests further.

In this *vanitas-vanitatum* mood I went down to the shore. For the first time in that day of wearying heat, I had a sense of freshness and repose. Except for broad half circles of a deeper blue, where the breeze ruffled it, the sea was as unwrinkled as the flesh of a child. The waves rose and fell upon the beach without breaking, with a rhythmic undulation like that of a woman breathing. Here, at last, was something uncorrupted and incorruptible. The sand was white and firm, and beneath the clear green water it was chequered by the motion of the waves into a flickering pattern of light and shade. Then I saw that I was not alone. A naked boy was splashing among the waves. His skin shone in the water as bright and ruddy as a burnished cherry. He shouted as the waves broke over him. This place of troubling memories was merely his playground. For him there was no past. He lived only in the momentary present, and the present moment for him was simply a sharp point of joy. The sight exorcised the despair which a moment before had whispered that there was nothing perdurable on earth but decay and death. For I was looking on two things that were unconquerable, certainly en-

## THE BURIED CITY

during, always beautiful, and always young—human flesh and the sea.

But that night I dreamed a dream. I saw a woman sitting upon the red mud of the shore of a still lake. The mud was as hard as a stone and split into fissures by the heat. All round her the air moved in infinitesimal vibrations. Her feet were bare, and the earth that had eaten into them was shot with all manner of iridescent colours. Her fingers were shrunk to such a thinness that the bronze rings which she wore upon them rattled whenever she moved a hand. The raising of an eyelid seemed to demand an intolerable effort. Her eyes were as blank as those of a dead sheep—they showed not a hint of pleading or sorrow or any kind of desire, not even of weariness or despair. They were meaningless utterly. Then I knew that her name was Sinis.



## THE SPIRIT OF PLACES

aspect. The working is subtler than that. I conceive that places which men have long inhabited, where their life has been intense and passionate and continuous for hundreds or thousands of years, are so saturated with human emotions that for long after the original agents have disappeared from the scene it is impossible to live in them or even to pass through them without being to some extent affected by the human spirit which they have absorbed. I think that not a little of the secret trouble which from time to time may fall upon you in strange places is due to these silent communications. Places, no less than men, are haunted by their past. There are many scenes of crime, not naturally repellent, which long after the event impart an adumbration of the horror they have seen enacted. There is a palpable influence in many churches that is exuded by stones impregnated by prayer. And there are many landscapes which have oppressed me with an indefinable sense of evil even before I discovered among their rocks those long stone tables which once were wet with the blood of human sacrifices. The truth is that inanimate objects are much less inanimate than we suppose. I cannot but believe that those triumphs and tragedies in which the soul of a people is deeply involved do not leave the spirit of places altogether untouched.

The degree of affection or dislike which certain towns arouse within us seems to me to depend

## THE BURIED CITY

less on their natural beauty or ugliness than on the quality of the human emotions whose tides have ebbed and flowed within them. To what else can you attribute those intimations of sympathy or antipathy which you frequently experience even when you enter a town at night and cannot at all discern its features? They are not dependent upon any physical reaction. They are formed upon the reports of that army of skirmishers which the spirit of a man sends out when he enters an unknown region, which warn him of the nearness of a friendly or hostile presence long before the inner sentinels of the senses bring in their more detailed messages. It is useless to demand a reason for the aversions and preferences of these spiritual monitors, but it is best for your peace of mind not to disregard their admonitions. I know that I hated Sinis more passionately than I ever hated any place before; but I should not know how to justify the hatred except by reference to this supreme and arbitrary authority, to which I have long since resigned the choice of my acquaintance among cities and places. I can only, therefore, record the impressions of a day during which I was ill at ease.

\* \* \*

Sardinia is as surprising in its physical as in its racial contrasts. In six hours the toy train crawls down the branch railway from the highlands of

## ORISTANO

Nuoro to the lowland of Oristano—that is to say, from the Switzerland to the Holland of Sardinia, or rather to I know not what mud-flats of Asia or Africa, for the character of Sinis is not European, but almost wholly Oriental. Sinis is the delta region at the mouth of Sardinia's principal river, the Tirso; and, like many other deltas, it has the luxuriance of life which seems to be bred not of health, but of corruption.

I have not a word to say against Oristano, the capital of this region. It is true that the Sardinian proverb says, *Chi va ad Oristano resta ad Oristano*, meaning that you take up your last quarters in the cypress-shaded cemetery. It is one of the worst hotbeds of malaria in the island. The stagnant lakes in which it abounds are prolific breeding-places of mosquitoes. You will find the doors and windows of your room at the *albergo* wired like a meat-safe, in order that you may be protected from the terror that flies by night. Apart from devising stratagems against flies and mosquitoes, there is little to do at Oristano. Sitting outside a café in the Piazza del Mercato and watching the groups of citizens yawning in the sun, I asked an inhabitant what was the principal diversion of the town. He spread out both his hands in an abrupt half circle which comprised the whole of the square. *Questo!* he remarked complacently—a simplification of the science of pleasure which to my



## THE BURIED CITY

mind seemed to denote no inconsiderable degree of culture.

Oristano is one of those cities in which one might well expect the melancholy fit to fall. It is full of the symbols of decay. In point of age it is more juvenile than most Sardinian towns, for it has not yet celebrated its thousandth birthday. But then, it had the misfortune to be born old. When the ancient Roman city of Tharros on the coast succumbed to the onslaughts of the Saracens in the eleventh century, the populace made one of those sudden resolutions which seem to have come so easily to the citizens of the Middle Ages, and transferred their city bodily ten miles further inland. Out of the ruins of Tharros, Oristano was born. Fragments of the older town were utilised in its construction. You can still see the ruins of the mud and rubble walls dovetailed among its houses, and relics of arches and columns imbedded like fossils in its slums. Its stones are full of the memory of Eleonora, the Sardinian Jeanne d'Arc, who broke the power of the Spaniards. Its cathedral is an unremarkable eighteenth-century edifice; but the admirable campanile, with its cupola of green and copper-coloured tiles, manages to convey a hint of Byzantium. Perhaps it was because I came straight down to Oristano after wandering among the wild villages of Barbagia that, in spite of its puny population of eight thousand souls, it seemed to me to have so sur-



## A SINISTER COUNTRY

prisingly much of the suavity and amenity of a city. For some reason which I cannot explain the undramatic play that was enacted all day upon the broad market-place, with the four-square, medieval tower of San Cristoforo for a background, was no less diverting to me than to the citizen to whom it afforded all his meed of pleasure.

But Oristano was like a friendly town in the midst of a hostile country. I had no sooner left its walls than I became aware of a sinister influence. I walked along a sombre avenue as obscure as a cathedral aisle until I came to a stone bridge spanning the Tirso. The Tirso is the longest river in Sardinia, and has its birth in the pure mountain torrents of Barbagia, but it did not rush to meet the embrace of the sea with the freshness and freedom which a mountain river should have. The plain seemed to have corrupted it; it slunk between the piers of the bridge in a brown, turgid flood, noiseless and odoriferous. Having gained the open country, the road ran between two fences of contorted cactus—surely it is the cactus rather than the mandrake which should groan when it is uprooted—overtopped by a growth of giant geranium, flaunting a perfectly sin-like scarlet. Twice it passed through deserted villages, but without losing anything of its unnecessary breadth, for it was broad as the road that leads to destruction.

## THE BURIED CITY

The houses that flanked it were ignoble, very low, and built of mud bricks. Once, over the cactus hedge, I saw a church standing isolated among the fields. It had a minaret-like tower which most strangely recalled both Holland and Africa. The bells began to ring with a kind of cracked and mocking revelry. I waited and watched. They ceased, and I was scarcely surprised that no worshippers answered their summons. The air was so still that I fancied I could hear the empty nave echo to the mutter of the lonely priest. As the walls gleamed in the yellowish light, it seemed to be the very chapel of Blake's vision—"the chapel all of gold, that none did dare to enter in."

It was Sunday morning, but a little further on I came across some peasants baking mud bricks and others reaping the corn. They were plucking it with their fingers, stalk by stalk. If they had cut it with a sickle or a scythe they would have reaped a harvest of thistles and poppies.

At Cabras the road runs abruptly into a wide lagoon. The village lies upon the shore, but quite unrefreshed by the nearness of the water. I never saw a village, even in the midst of a plain, so desolate in aspect, so choked and parched with heat, reflecting such a hatefully metallic light. I found the market-place black with men. They were of a type that I had seen nowhere else in the island, and wore a peculiar costume the peculiarity of

## CABRAS

which was the scantiness of it. They were bare from the feet to the middle of the thigh, for the sea and the shallow lagoons are so much their native element that it is never worth their while to dress as landsmen. While the men were standing ankle-deep in the dust, as insensible to the withering heat as lizards, the women were sitting in the cool of the church. They squatted cross-legged on the floor of the nave, blackening the marble pavement from the door to the altar-steps. The company was as sadly dressed as at a Quakers' meeting; nowhere was there a note of the gay colouring of the south. They were shrouded in sombre shawls, shading from russet to rusty black, which covered their heads and half their faces like veils. Lean dogs ran in and out among the seated figures; swarthy naked children crawled about like reptiles; an aged priest murmured at the altar, and throughout the church sounded the mild hum of a *conversazione*. The conversation and the elaborate business at the altar ceased simultaneously, the women went out into the glare of the piazza, holding their veils across their mouths, and walked swiftly and silently to their homes.

The little waves of the *stagno* almost washed the walls of the church. The water was the colour of clay tinged with blood, but round the edges it shone with all the beautiful, unseemly colours of putrescence. A slight breeze agitated it into



## THE BURIED CITY

ripples and brought the warm breath of decay to the nostrils. Near to the shore some worn-out horses stood up to their bellies in the oily water, with their fore-legs tied closely together. Naked urchins, as brown as the red mud, splashed about in the water and threw stones at them. Each time that they were hit they gave a jerky leap forward. A ruined tower on the shore of the lake and a stretch of low hills on the horizon were the only incidents in the flat and featureless landscape.

In this afternoon of distressing heat and in this country of desolate, limitless expanse, I made a discovery which very likely you have already made. I discovered that all those qualities that go to make up the charm of the South—I do not mean the tropical, but the European South—may too easily be carried to a point at which they become horrible. There is not a single one of those incidents which make the life of southern countries so pleasurable to look on at that may not be exaggerated and distorted into a means of pain. All that casualness of living, all those circumstances of disorder, which to the traveller newly arrived from countries with business habits are as refreshing as the folly of children after the staid ways of grown-up people, at a certain well-defined point pass from beauty to outrageous squalor. The squalor remains when the trick of the picturesque has ceased to deceive the eye.



## HATEFULNESS OF THE SOUTH

The inimitable southern gesture is essentially the grace of the animal ; at first one forgets the basis of animality which it presumes ; but one day it becomes too explicit, and one thirsts for the grace of the spirit. The gladdening southern light is capable of an intensity that grips the soul with melancholy more fatally than the gloom of the North. Sooner or later in the experience of every northerner who lives in a southern latitude there comes a moment when he cannot help crying out, "Hateful is the dark blue sky vaulted o'er the dark blue sea." The grateful southern heat can torture the body as well as comfort it. The eye wearies of the riot of colour, and searches in vain for cool and temperate tones. And that perpetual charm of Mediterranean countries, the sense of the encompassing past, may become suddenly so acute that the mind revolts against the tyranny of everything that is olden, and hates the untimely reminder that the end of strength is weakness, and of beauty decay. The beauty of the South is not assured and indestructible like that of a Greek statue ; it depends upon the conjunction of felicitous circumstances ; it is like the smile of a woman whose heart is sored. It is a mask, and I shall never again be quite secure against a misgiving that the mask may at any instant drop and disclose those features, as I saw them at Cabras, which are neither fresh nor kindly nor happy.

## THE BURIED CITY

I pushed further on into the heart of this forlorn country, making for the finger of land pointing out into the sea, at the extremity of which is the site of the ancient Tharros. The road ran along the shores of the stagnant lake of Cabras and then lost itself in a maze of sandy, weed-grown tracks. To the right and left parched crops were struggling for existence with the choking weeds. Just over the ears of the corn the air trembled as it trembles over a lime-kiln. The rank grass swarmed and hummed with life. Monstrous grasshoppers skirmished before my feet, making a continuous rustling, as of silk dresses, among the dry herbage. Emerald-backed lizards paused listening, and then flashed across the path, seeming even more bejewelled and fantastic than their gorgeous imitations in the jewellers' shops. Majestic dragon-flies whirred after their prey. The sun flashed upon the beautiful iridescence of all those insects that feed upon corruption. A myriad forms of life were busy upon their infinitesimal activities, yet it was a life which impressed one as being monstrous, exotic, and in some inexplicable way corrupt.

At length I reached the narrow peninsula that terminates in the Capo S. Marco. Here as a fitting epilogue to this dead region stood a Byzantine basilica, grey, ruinous, and forlorn, in a waste of sand. Its doors and windows were blocked up, its white dome battered and shapeless. It wore

## THARROS

the aspect of uttermost age, yet it was the latest work of man that stood beside this desolate shore. It had been run up in the eighth century ; the builders, to save themselves pains, had utilised the bricks and columns of the Roman town hard by. A little further on was the quarry which had supplied the material for its construction, the debris of ancient Tharros. Little remained of this proud city, which once measured four miles in circumference. Time had dismantled its buildings, but had been unable to loosen the granite-like mortar which still bound the thin Roman bricks together. The drifting sand had half buried the broken masses of masonry, but the lines of the paved streets and the ruts worn by the chariot wheels were still faintly discernible. As I strolled along the beach I was astounded to find it strewn with fragments of Roman pottery. At every step one trod upon bricks, tiles, arms and mouths of amphoræ, morsels of jars and pitchers of every shape and texture—nothing unmutilated, but everything suggesting design and beauty.

I picked up a piece of terra-cotta, the use of which I could only conjecture ; it might have been a portion of a frieze or of the cornice of a wall. It was crudely decorated with a series of shallow impressions, obviously made by printing the thumb upon the wet clay. Underneath was a row of double indentations, the prints of the first



## THE BURIED CITY

and second fingers. These signatures of the Roman workman were as fresh as if they had been made only yesterday. It was plain that the nails had been long and sharp, that of the second finger broken. The thing was rude and insignificant, worthless from the antiquarian's point of view ; yet it had a magic in it. It was more eloquent than the most moving page of Gibbon. It had the thrill of the spoken word. It reconstructed a city on these weed-grown sands, populated it with men, snapshotted, as it were, one of those trivial incidents which form nine-tenths of human life—the nine-tenths which history ignores—such as the breaking of a finger-nail. For it is the trifles and minutiae of a buried civilisation that abridge the centuries and enable us to touch hands with the past.

But I had not yet reached the end of the promontory nor progressed far enough down the avenue of the centuries. On the Mediterranean shores, where the writing is still legible, the tale is usually the same : before Rome—Greece, Carthage, and Phœnicia. When your imagination has carried you back as far as it conveniently can, and out of school-day memories and the mind's jetsam of classical lore you have attempted to reconstruct and repeople a past civilisation, you find that you have to set out on a further journey to more unknown and alien regions. Of Greece and Rome we can form a coherent if not an exact



## CHANGE AND DECAY

account ; but of that mysterious race which set out from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon to explore the world, feeling its way from headland to headland round the shores of the Mediterranean, like a blind man groping round a room, our images are fantastic and confused. The very name of Tharros, tradition says, derives from a woman of Phœnicia, the wife of a king. The cliff which descends abruptly at the end of the promontory is honeycombed with the tombs of the Carthaginian colonists. This deep-hewn necropolis was once a mine of gold and precious stones, but the modern antiquary has completed the work of spoliation that the Saracen began a thousand years ago. Time and tempest have split open the rocks and broken in upon the repose of princes. The wind whistles among the once subterranean chambers, and the narrow doorways through which the corpses were carried to their airless tombs now form broken casements looking out on to the changing sapphire of the sea. Sand and dust have half-choked the massive sarcophagi which once enshrined bracelets and necklets, rings and earrings, and the gold fillets that bound the foreheads of the priestesses of Baal.

At Tharros the burden of the past became insupportable. When it is desiccated, ticketed, boxed in a museum, the past is merely curious, never terrible. Objects uprooted from their natural soil lose their spell ; they may exercise the

## THE BURIED CITY

mind's ingenuity, but they leave the emotions cold. The museum atmosphere dries up the source of tears. At Tharros scarcely anything that you can take account of remains ; it is the emptiness and desolation of the scene that evokes so keen a sense of the destructive and remorseless working of time. Upon the blank background the imagination flashes pictures of the vivid life once lived within this little space—the quays thronged with crowds when the galleys came in from Carthage bringing news of the latest victories of Hannibal ; the narrow, noisy streets, through which the oxen dragged the solid-wheeled carts laden with corn for the granaries of Rome ; the procession of women moving erectly with amphoræ on their heads as they went night and morning to the well which you can still find in the waste of sand ; the great temple of the Egyptians, the destruction of which Anthony, a native of Tharros, lamented in the ninth century, the Roman temple of Minerva, the forum, and the amphitheatre. Now the place is a desert, and the only sounds that interrupt the deathly silence are the cries of the gulls as they fly over the empty tombs. The scene gave rise to a sense of despair—that most poisonous despair which whispers an assurance of the futility of all human effort. It evoked a vision of destiny as the sad mistress of men and gods alike, quietly alert, infinitely patient, foreseeing the ruin of everything that is

## YOUTH AND THE SEA

laboriously built up, dooming the activity of ages to sterility, secure in her ultimate triumph. In this corner of the world her triumph was already achieved. From here she would push her conquests further.

In this *vanitas-vanitatum* mood I went down to the shore. For the first time in that day of wearying heat, I had a sense of freshness and repose. Except for broad half circles of a deeper blue, where the breeze ruffled it, the sea was as unwrinkled as the flesh of a child. The waves rose and fell upon the beach without breaking, with a rhythmic undulation like that of a woman breathing. Here, at last, was something uncorrupted and incorruptible. The sand was white and firm, and beneath the clear green water it was chequered by the motion of the waves into a flickering pattern of light and shade. Then I saw that I was not alone. A naked boy was splashing among the waves. His skin shone in the water as bright and ruddy as a burnished cherry. He shouted as the waves broke over him. This place of troubling memories was merely his playground. For him there was no past. He lived only in the momentary present, and the present moment for him was simply a sharp point of joy. The sight exorcised the despair which a moment before had whispered that there was nothing perdurable on earth but decay and death. For I was looking on two things that were unconquerable, certainly en-

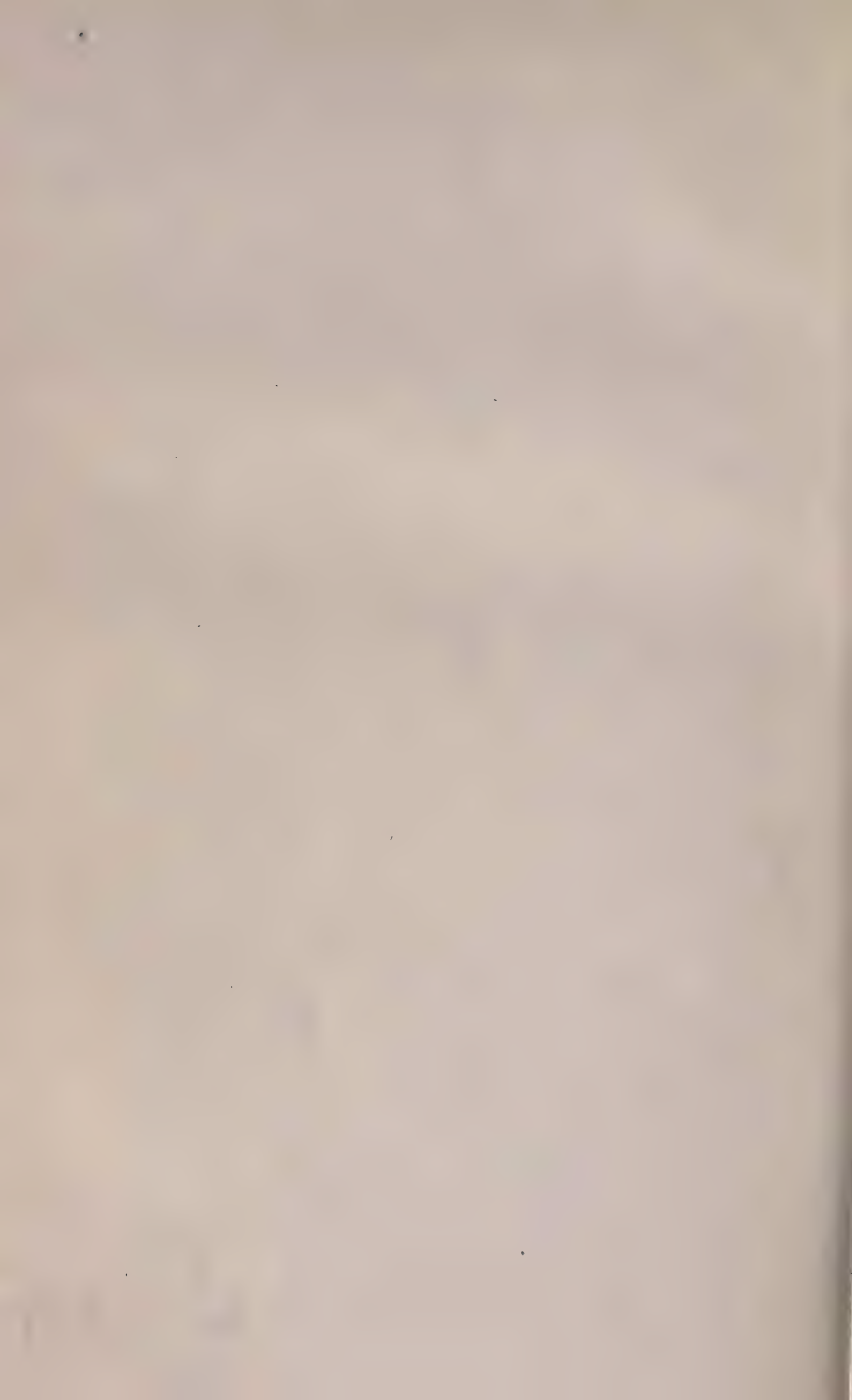
## THE BURIED CITY

during, always beautiful, and always young—human flesh and the sea.

But that night I dreamed a dream. I saw a woman sitting upon the red mud of the shore of a still lake. The mud was as hard as a stone and split into fissures by the heat. All round her the air moved in infinitesimal vibrations. Her feet were bare, and the earth that had eaten into them was shot with all manner of iridescent colours. Her fingers were shrunk to such a thinness that the bronze rings which she wore upon them rattled whenever she moved a hand. The raising of an eyelid seemed to demand an intolerable effort. Her eyes were as blank as those of a dead sheep—they showed not a hint of pleading or sorrow or any kind of desire, not even of weariness or despair. They were meaningless utterly. Then I knew that her name was Sinis.



## APPENDIX



## THE TRAVELLER IN THE ISLANDS OF THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN

### SARDINIA

SARDINIA is the forgotten isle of the Mediterranean. Until a generation or two ago its abandonment was almost as complete as if it had lain among the Outer Hebrides instead of in the very centre of European life. Yet in the dawn of the Mediterranean civilisation it was one of the first places to be touched by the Eastern colonisers of Europe. Some thousand years before Christ a westward migration took place from Asia Minor which is comparable with the great discoveries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries of our era. There was the same fever for the possession of the precious metals. An excitement spread through the coasts of Tyre and Sidon which, perhaps, was not altogether unlike that which went over England and Spain when the reports were made known of the first happy voyages to the Indies and the Americas. Daring adventurers pushed westwards to the silver-bearing mountains of Spain, and beyond the Pillars of Hercules to the remote isles of the ocean. The Phœnician

## SARDINIA

fleet, returning with the spoils of Tarshish and the Casserides, put in at the Sardinian harbours of Tharros, Nova, and Caralis. The great city of Caralis, with its hundred thousand inhabitants, probably lies buried beneath the waters of the Stagno di Cagliari, but the cliff is still riddled with the tombs of the Carthaginian colonists. The great age of Sardinia arrived when Rome wrested the island from the rival empire of Carthage. Its inhabitants then numbered two millions, more than double the present population. The Romans drove their great highways from Cagliari in the south to Porto Torres at the north-western and Terranova at the north-eastern extremity. The granaries of Rome had to be enlarged to store the grain that the galleys brought from the Sardinian cornfields. The amphitheatre, where twenty thousand citizens used to applaud the combats of wild beasts and gladiators, still stands on a slope of the hill of Cagliari.

But when the power of Rome decayed, Sardinia fell into a kind of enchanted sleep from which it is only now awaking. If you penetrate into the interior of the island you come upon traces of the civilisation of two thousand years ago. The mode of yoking the oxen and of drawing the furrows is Roman; the construction of the carts, with their solid, spokeless wheels, the form of the plough, the spades, the axes, the baskets, the pitchforks, have remained almost



## THE LINGERING PAST

unchanged since classical times. In some parts the language that the peasants speak is a dialect of Rome. There are villages where, although you know no word of Spanish or Italian, you can make your wants known through the medium of Latin. There are still Greek phrases embedded in the language which have come down from the time of Justinian, or even from the days of the earliest Greek colonists. Dances which are the same as those of ancient Greece are still danced at *feste* among the mountains. The *launedda*, the popular instrument of Sardinia, which is only now giving place to the accordion, is none other than the antique pipe made of reeds. The costume of the peasant bears a certain resemblance to that of the Roman shepherd, and has certainly undergone no change since the Middle Ages.

The isolation of Sardinia is partly accounted for by the configuration of the island. Sardinia turns its back upon Italy. Along the whole of the eastern coast runs a mountain chain which presents a brusque escarpment towards the mainland and makes the island difficult of access on this side. On the western side the mountains sink to the sea-level in gentler declivities; the rivers flow down widening valleys to pour themselves into that empty basin of the Mediterranean which lies between Sardinia and the islands of Spain. With the exception of the plain of the Campidano between Cagliari and Oristano, once an arm of the

## SARDINIA

sea, the rest of the island, which has a greater extent than Wales, is a network of mountain ranges. They culminate in the centre in the great mass of the Gennargentu, the Gate of Silver, the highest peaks of which are capped with snow almost all the year round. Before the construction of the roads and of the two branch railways to Nuoro and Sorgono the remote mountain districts were completely isolated. Each village lived an independent life, preserving its own dialect, its own customs, and even its own special costume.

Undoubtedly the two chief reasons why the traveller has in general shunned Sardinia are its insalubrity and its insecurity. The climate of Sardinia has always had a bad name. Probably the conditions have deteriorated rather than improved since the days when Rome got rid of its undesirable citizens by exiling them to Sardinia. The low-lying districts round the coasts are largely covered by shallow salt lakes and marshes which breed the fatal fever, or *intemperie*, as it is called, that is the curse of the island. The mists arising from the *stagni* make it somewhat unsafe to be abroad in these regions during the pleasant hours of sundown and sunrise. The summer months are the worst. "The *intemperie*," says Baedeker, "renders the island, with the exception of the larger towns, uninhabitable for strangers from July to October." This condemnation,

## AN UNDESIRABLE EXCURSION

however, is too sweeping. It would, of course, be folly to generalise from a single instance, but in justice to the much-maligned climate I may mention that I passed a scorching week in July at Oristano, a veritable fever-nest, without suffering any ill effects. I remember that one day I asked the son of the landlord of the *albergo* to take me to see some Roman tombs which had recently been unearthed. In the late afternoon we went down to the shores of the *stagno*, and my guide led me along a muddy causeway which ran out among the reeds some distance into the marsh. The air was full of noisome exhalations, and the mosquitoes settled upon us in clouds. When we were in the midst of the swamp the boy turned and told me that the fever was more deadly here than anywhere else in the island, and that he had brought me to see the interesting draining operations which the Government were undertaking in order to attempt to remedy the pestilential conditions! In this case I didn't regret that I had provided myself with a stock of quinine. It is a wise precaution to take if you propose to visit Oristano in July.

In addition to Oristano there are other localities which have an evil reputation for malaria. The following are the principal: On the westward side of the bay of Cagliari, the plain between Capoterra and the *stagni* of Cagliari; further south on the same coast the plain around



## SARDINIA

Pula ; Teulada, at the southern extremity of the island ; on the south-east coast, the district of Sarrabus and the mouth of the Flumendosa (Muravera, Villaputzu, and S. Vito) ; Bosa, on the west coast at the mouth of the Temo ; the district of Nurra in the north ; Porto Torres, the port of embarkation for Corsica and Genoa ; and Terranova, near the Golfo Aranci on the north-east. Fortunately for the traveller, these places have least attraction from the scenic point of view, but there are interesting antiquities at Oristano, Pula, and Porto Torres. The mountain districts, however, are not altogether immune, especially in the month of October. The winds carry the exhalations from the fever zones up to the higher levels. Even at Nuoro, which has an altitude of nearly 2000 feet, I have seen peasants who had been working all day in the valleys return at nightfall trembling with fever. The peasant's principal protection against the fever is his costume. The fleece of the *mastruca*, which he wears even in the scorching heat of summer, makes him more or less unsusceptible of the effects of the climate. On the whole, however, the dangers of the climate appear to have been exaggerated. The traveller who avoids the low-lying regions at the mouths of the rivers has little to fear, even if he visits the island in the height of the summer. The best season is the spring and early summer. You may expect rain in February



## TRADITIONS OF LAWLESSNESS

and October, and wind in March. The climate of Cagliari and the southern part of the island is pleasant all through the winter, but begins to be unpleasantly warm about the end of June. Naturally, in the mountainous districts the winter is more severe and the summer more temperate. The traveller will therefore vary his itinerary according to the time of the year, but he will do well to avoid Sardinia in the month of October.

Sardinia has inherited a tradition of lawlessness from its turbulent past, but to-day the conditions are changed. Memories of the vendetta may linger in the district of Gallura in the north, and among the mountains of Nuoro, but with these the traveller has nothing to do. It would, perhaps, be too much to say that brigandage is altogether extinct. One of the first items of news that I saw on opening a paper at Cagliari was that a canon of the cathedral had been seized in Barbagia and carried away to the mountains, the brigands demanding a ransom of 20,000 lire. Whether the chapter considered him worth the price I cannot say. On my first excursion into the interior, I travelled on the branch railway that runs to Tortoli, and got off at Gairo, intending to walk across the hills to Lanusei. On the map the distance did not seem far, but I found that it was a four hours' walk. It was already dusk when I left the wayside station, and I had not gone far when I heard someone calling me.

## SARDINIA

It was a peasant who was walking in the same direction. His surprise at finding a solitary foreigner setting off at that hour to walk over the mountains to Lanusei was unbounded. As we trudged along a gloomy valley in the shadow of precipitous hills he began to enlarge upon the dangers of travelling in Sardinia. His dialect was difficult to understand. It appeared, however, that I was safe so long as I only met a single native on the road, but if I met a company of two or three they would certainly stop me and demand a thousand lire! As the darkness had already fallen, he easily persuaded me to spend the night at a cottage by the roadside, the owner of which was a friend of his. It was a wretched hovel. The floor of the room where I slept was so full of holes that I had to move with circumspection in order to avoid being precipitated into the cellar beneath. I confess that at first I suspected a trap, for the friend would have required no make-up if he had been cast for the part of villain in a Drury Lane melodrama. In the morning, however, the peasant showed the same sincere solicitude for my welfare, and offered to accompany me as far as Lanusei.

The wealthy resident perhaps still runs a certain amount of risk in travelling in the wilder parts of Sardinia. Certainly, if he is known to have much money about him, he offers a temptation to the enterprising peasant in those regions

## MINOR DANGERS

where *carabinieri* are few and far between. But the passing tourist has no cause for alarm. I walked for many days among the mountains with no other weapon than a walking-stick, and though I met many peasants, singly and in companies of two or three, they only stopped me in order to wish that I might go with God. Speaking from my own experience, I would say that the only real perils of travel in Sardinia are its dogs and railway trains. In all countries when you approach a farm or an isolated dwelling in the country you are prepared for a doubtful reception from the dogs. But in Sardinia they scarcely hesitate to attack you even when you are walking peaceably upon the high road. The breed is particularly ferocious, and it is said that the peasants have a way of stimulating their ferocity by tying a bladder filled with blood to the neck of a dummy man and encouraging the animals to spring at the neck and tear open the bladder. Travelling on a branch railway in Sardinia has also its dangers. On the main line the trains never get up speed enough to succeed in varying the monotony of the journey by an accident, but on the branch lines they appear to have a constitutional incapacity for keeping on the metals. The engine is continually making frantic dashes into the scenery. On the line to Tortoli I made four journeys and had three accidents. On one occasion, after a car had been wrecked, the



## SARDINIA

various employees gathered round the wreckage and spent the remainder of a sultry afternoon in bitterly disputing the proper apportionment of the blame for the accident. As it was impossible to proceed that evening, I spent the night at the railway station, and enjoyed a comfort that I found nowhere else in the island.

Sardinia lies nearer to Africa than to Europe, but the shortest sea-passage is from Civita Vecchia, the port of Rome, to Capo Figari in the Golfo degli Aranci. The steamboat leaves Civita Vecchia daily about five o'clock in the evening. It is about 220 miles from Golfo Aranci to Cagliari, a distance which the express accomplishes in some eleven or twelve hours. When I was in Cagliari the municipal council resigned as a protest against the time-table of the state railway, so that probably the journey has now been shortened. There is a weekly service direct to Cagliari from Genoa, Naples, Palermo, and Tunis, and a less frequent service from Marseilles.

In Sardinia you must not look for luxury in the hotels, but you will find a certain amount of comfort at the *Scala di Ferro* and the *Quattro Mori*, at Cagliari. It was the driver of the 'bus who showed me my room at the *Scala di Ferro* and settled the price of it—two and a half lire a day. It was not customary, he said, to allow *pension*



## CAGLIARI

terms—an arrangement I didn't regret as soon as I discovered the restaurant on the Bastione San Remy. Cagliari is not Sardinia, and although its atmosphere is perceptibly different from that of the ordinary Italian town, I don't think it will detain the traveller many days. When you have seen the Roman and Carthaginian tombs in the suburb of S. Avendrace, which are about a mile out of the city just on the right of the Via Nazionale that runs to Sassari and Porto Torres, when you have walked among the ruins of the Roman amphitheatre, wandered through the streets in the Quartiere "Castello," visited the cathedral, watched the sun set from the Buon Camino, and dined by starlight on the Bastione San Remy, you will begin to long to penetrate into the heart of the real Sardinia that lies on the other side of the encircling rampart of hills.

There are three places which you might select as your objective—Lanusei, on the branch line to Tortoli; Aritzo, on the line to Sorgono; and Nuoro, which is the terminus of the branch line from Macomer. The charm of Lanusei is its panorama of almost Alpine grandeur. It is also one of the chief sporting centres of the island. Owing, however, to its nearness to Tortoli, which has a considerable trade with the Continent, the life here is less primitive than in many other of the mountain districts. The town is acquiring a distinctly modern aspect, and most of the

## SARDINIA

inhabitants wear either the ordinary European dress or a compromise between that and the costume of Sardinia.

The better plan is to take the train at once to Aritzo. Aritzo is in the heart of Barbagia, and Barbagia is the heart of Sardinia. It is not perhaps the most characteristic village of Barbagia, but then the most essentially Barbagian villages make no provision for the accommodation of travellers. The inn at Aritzo, Albergo Simoncini, is "comfortable" in the Sardinian sense of the word, the English equivalent of which is "tolerable." There you dine in a pleasant upper room with a bare floor, a painted ceiling, and a view overlooking a valley covered with chestnut woods, and musical with the noise of mountain torrents. The air is fresh and cool even in the summer months. Aritzo is a centre for excursions into the Gennargentu. The sure-footed mountain horses can be hired for one and a half *lire* a day. It is worth spending a night in the Refugia La Marmora in order to see the sun rise on Bruncu Spina (6290 ft.). Within easy reach are the delightful mountain villages of Desulo, notable for the fine barbaric costume of its inhabitants, and Tonara, where the *torroni* is made, divided into four little hamlets with the Arab-sounding names of Arabulé, Ilala, Tóneri, and Telaseri. If you wish to stay at Desulo, mournful and enchanting, you will find no inn there, but you can arrange with



A WEDDING GROUP, ARITZO





## THE HEART OF THE ISLAND

one of the wealthier villagers to provide you with a bed. From Aritzo it is a glorious day's ride via Desulo to Fonni, a town that lies upon a rolling tableland more than 3000 feet above the sea. Here are one or two quite decent inns. A diligence, or *carrozza postale*, runs from Fonni to Nuoro, passing through Mamoiada. If you are in the neighbourhood on a Sunday, it is worth while making a détour to Orgosolo to hear the singing at Mass.

Nuoro is, of course, most easily reached by rail from Macomer, on the main line from Cagliari to Sassari. If anyone were to ask me where he could see all that was most characteristic of Sardinian life and scenery, and yet not forego the usual comforts of civilisation, I would recommend him to go to Nuoro. It is situated in the midst of the Sardinian Switzerland, nearly 2000 feet above the sea, swept by the purest breezes under heaven, backed by masses of solid granite, and commanding a view of range beyond range of the loftiest mountains of Sardinia, ending in the distant crests of the Gennargentu. The race which inhabits this stern mountain region is proud, passionate, and shadowed with melancholy. Here all the traditions of the old order have held out longest against the encroachments of a more modern civilisation—the vendetta, the weird rites that precede the burial of the dead, the improvisation of songs, the poetic speech, the

## SARDINIA

ancient solemn dance. If you would seize the spirit of the place, you must read Grazia Deledda's charming novel, *La Via del Male*. As befits a place of seven thousand inhabitants, Nuoro possesses, besides a cathedral, one or two moderately comfortable inns. About five miles from the town are some interesting prehistoric remains, known as *domus de janas*, *perdas fittas*, and *tumbas de gigantes*.

The south-west corner of the island is the centre of the mining industry. The district, of which the principal town is Iglesias, is also notable for the unhealthiness of its climate and for the Moorish descent of the inhabitants, who are still spoken of as Maureddos.\*

Sassari is the capital of the northern province and the great rival of Cagliari. It has spacious squares, pleasant gardens, and a lively air; but for me it had none of that elusive quality which, for want of a better word, we call charm. The reader can, if he likes, consider my judgment biassed, for in the great feud between the capitals of the northern and southern provinces I frankly acknowledge myself to be a partisan of Cagliari. But no one should go to Sassari without visiting the port of Alghero, about twenty miles beyond. A walled city always seems to me to enclose

\* The strain of Eastern blood is very evident in the features of the peasant girl in the illustration on the cover of this book. She is a native of Teulada.



A SPINSTER OF FONNI





## IN FAERY LANDS FORLORN

almost all of romance that has not perished from the world ; but when its walls rise up out of the sea something is added of sadness and mystery that is equally indescribable and unaccountable. One evening, after dining indifferently well at the *Albergo d'Italia* and drinking some of that *torbato*, the sweetest wine I have ever tasted, which is only saved from sickliness by its exquisite flavour, I walked along the deserted battlements when the grey stones reddened with the reflection of the glow above the hills on the other side of the bay, and for a few moments that vision of " magic casements opening on the foam of perilous seas in faery lands forlorn " was made reality. I know that *torbato* is so named because it is said to perturb the mind. Would you therefore condemn the mood ? Let me rather commend the wine.

· Of all the countries of Western Europe, Sardinia is the richest in prehistoric remains. The most remarkable are the *nuraghi*, pyramid-like structures which I believe are not known to exist in any other part of the world, although they bear a certain resemblance to the *talayots* of Menorca. Some four thousand of these towers of cyclopean construction remain scattered throughout the island ; they are most numerous and best preserved in the region round Macomer. Their origin and their use are wrapped in mystery ; whether

## SARDINIA

they served as temples, tombs, or towers of refuge, whether they were built by the Phœnicians, Canaanites, Iberians, by eastern races of unknown origin, or by the indigenous inhabitants before the earliest age of colonisation, archæologists have been unable to agree.

The most interesting relics of the Roman occupation will be found around Cagliari (at No. 253 Corso Vittorio Emanuele II are the remains of a villa), Pula, Oristano, and Porto Torres (the port of Sassari). Fordongianus, the ancient *Forum Trajani*, has a thermal spring and the remains of Roman baths. It can be reached by diligence either from Oristano or from the next station, Simaxis, a distance of about fifteen and ten miles respectively. The bleak and dreary village of Porto Torres, which stands on the site of *Turris Libyssonis*, was under the Romans the second most important city in the island. There you will find the ruins of a Roman Temple of Fortune, of the *Palazzo del Re Barbaro*, and of an aqueduct, but the principal glory of the place is the beautiful, excellently preserved basilica of S. Gavino.

Sardinia offers exceptional facilities for sport. The *mufloni*, which perhaps are the wild ancestors of our domestic sheep, have been exterminated in every other island of the Mediterranean except Corsica. They are still to be found among the

## SPORT

fastnesses of the Gennargentu in the neighbourhood of Desulo, Tonara, Fonni, and Aritzo. Wild deer abound in the mountainous districts of Nuoro, Ozieri, Goceano, Lanusei, Pula, and Teulada. *Cinghiali*, or wild boar, are very plentiful. The close season for deer and *mufloni* is from the middle of February to the middle of December; for *cinghiali*, from the end of February to May.

Tunny fishing is an important industry in Sardinia, and one of the most remarkable sights which the island has to offer is the *mattanza*, or slaughter of the tunny. The season lasts from the beginning of May to the 24th of June. The best place for seeing a *mattanza* is Carloforte, in the island of San Pietro, near Iglesias.

The most vivid picture of the traditional Sardinian life is to be seen in the country *feste*. Unfortunately most of them fall in the months of August, September, and October—the worst possible season for the traveller.

Cagliari holds the saints in high esteem—or would it be truer to say that its observance of the calendar is so scrupulous because it has so great need of music and pageant? At the seasons of Holy Week, the Assumption, and Corpus Christi the whole city appears to be engrossed in pious duties, as each of the four quarters holds its own celebrations independently. But of all the religious festivals the most renowned and the



## SARDINIA

most characteristic is the *fiesta* of Sant' Efisio, the national feast of the island. The ceremony takes the form of a procession to Pula and back—a village on the other side of the *Stagno di Cagliari*, nine miles distant, where the saint is believed to have suffered martyrdom. The procession leaves the capital at midday on the 1st of May and returns on the evening of the 4th, the image of the saint being escorted by a cavalcade of horsemen in the costume of the ancient Sardinian militia, preceded by musicians playing *launeddas*.

The following is a list of the other most important *feste* with their *approximate* dates:—

Quartu Sant' Elena (six miles from Cagliari), May 21st and September 11th.

Decimannu (ten miles from Cagliari), May 1st and the last Sunday of September.

Iglesias. Feast of the *Virgine di Buoncammino*, in October, lasts three days.

Sorgono. *S. Mauro*, in May. The feast is held at an ancient church in a valley about three miles from the town, and lasts three days.

Nuoro. *S. Salvatore*, August 6th; and *La Virgine delle Grazie*, November 21st. Three days.

Oristano. *Santa Croce*, in September; and *La Virgine del Rimedio*, also in September.

Cabras. *Santa Maria Maddalena*, May 27th.

Fordongianus. *S. Lussorio*, August 21st. Seven days.



## FESTE

Aritzo. *S. Basilio*, at the beginning of September.

Desulo. *S. Pietro*, the end of June.

Mamoiada. *S. Cosimo*, September 25th. Three days.

Sanluri (on the main line to Cagliari). *S. Lorenzo*, August 10th.

Torralba (near Oristano). Sant' Antonio—the *fešta* is held at a little church three miles from the town—and *SS. Giuseppe* and *Sebastiano*, September 1st and 2nd. Two famous *fešte* are held at Borutta, about five miles from Torralba—that of *Corpus*, and another on July 29th, when the peasants make the traditional circuit of the church, as at Sedilo.

Sedilo (station, Abbassanta). *S. Costantino*, July 5th. Three days.

Mores (near Chilivani). *S. Giovanni Battista*, June 24th. Ten days.

Ploaghe (between Chilivani and Sassari). *Feast of the Assumption*, August 15th. Twelve individuals, richly vested, walk in the procession representing the Apostles. Also *S. Michele*, September 29th.

Porto Torres. *S. Gavino*, June 3rd.

Tempio. *S. Paulo*, August 25th and 26th.

Sant' Antioco (in the island of the same name on the south-west coast). *Sant' Antioco*, in May.

Orgosolo, August 15th, ten days.

## MALLORCA

### MALLORCA

Although discomposing to adventurous spirits, I think it may be taken as a general rule that the beaten track is the best track. Of course, the ideal journey is a voyage of discovery. But the heroic age of travel is over, at any rate as far as Europe is concerned. The fact that a place is little known is in itself an incitement to visit it, but at this present point of time if a place is little known the odds are that it is little worth knowing.

Certainly the beaten track in Mallorca passes through a great part of the most notable scenery of the island. After reposing for a while in the large leisure of Palma, even the most hurried traveller seldom leaves Mallorca without making two excursions: one by road to Soller, passing through Valldemosa, skirting Miramar and the northern coast, and returning over the Coll de Soller; the other by rail to Manacor, a town of little interest, in order to visit the renowned caves—the *Cuevas del Drach*, near Porto Cristo, and those of Artá, about fifteen miles further east. The visitor who limits himself to these two routes, however, can scarcely be said to have seen Mallorca. To plan a wider itinerary, it would be necessary to know the temperament of the traveller and the time at his disposal, but it is pos-

## CHARACTER OF HOTELS

sible to point out the main omissions of the beaten track.

At Palma you might stay a day or six months, according as you find the place *simpatico* or not. You can exhaust the sights of the city in a day ; but its grave charm may hold you for many weeks—especially if you are a lover of towns, but have become wearied of large towns. The spirit of a town reaches the stranger to a great extent through the atmosphere of the hotel where he stays. The atmosphere of the Grand Hotel is of the familiar cosmopolitan kind, which seems to interpose a barrier between the place and the visitor, and never allows him to forget for an instant that he is a foreigner. At the Alhambra the spirit of the town will come to you through the medium of the music-hall, of which it is a kind of annexe. At the Fonda de Mallorca the medium is pleasantly, and at the Hôtel Continental rather unpleasantly, Mallorquin. About four miles from Palma, on the road to Andraitx, is a delightfully situated hotel, Cas Catalá, with sunny terraces on the water's edge and a fine view of the bay, although Palma itself is hidden behind a jutting point of land. It is little more than a mile beyond the terminus of the tramway to Porto-Pi, but as the trams keep very early hours it is somewhat isolated at night.

Soller can now be reached by railway, but it is infinitely pleasanter to spend an hour or two

## MALLORCA

longer over the journey and go by road, making the *détour* through Valldemosa, Miramar, and Deya. At Valldemosa stands the Carthusian monastery where Georges Sand and Chopin spent the winter of 1838, occupying a suite of spacious cells with a terrace overlooking the orange groves and the valley. Miramar is a large estate lying on the cliffs of the northern coast, the Mallorquin home of the Austrian Archduke Ludwig Salvator, the author of the standard work on Mallorca, *Die Baleares in Wort und Bild geschildert*. By the roadside is a *hospedería*, or guest-house, maintained by the Archduke, where the traveller is provided with a bed, salt, and olives for three days and nights free of charge. Other provisions he must bring with him—if he brings eggs, Don Fernando's wife will convert them into unforgettable omelettes!

Soller, lying in the midst of its orchards at the foot of the noble *sierra* of Mallorca, is a place that you will love the more the longer you live in it. You can wander as your fancy leads you among the groves of olives and oranges which surround the town, and you will discover a different walk for every day of the year. It is the best centre for making expeditions on foot or on mule-back into the mountains. The most arduous undertaking is the ascent of Puig Mayor (4740 ft.), the highest mountain in the island. The pools of *Gorch Blau* lie on the further side of the Puig in



## SOLLER

the very heart of the mountains, some four or five hours from Soller. If you follow the gorge on towards the northern coast you come to the magnificent *Torrente de Pareys*, but it is best to visit this by sea. Choose a calm day, and take a boat from the port of Soller, a picturesque little fishing village nestling in a tiny bay about two miles from the town. To go to the pilgrimage church of *Nuestra Señora de Lluch* is a six hours' expedition; it is necessary to stay the night at the monastery and return to Soller, or proceed to Pollensa the following day. One of the finest walks is that up the *Barranco*, a ravine up which the mule-track climbs like a staircase, past the Puig de Olofre to the town of Alaró, which is connected by rail with Palma. Nearer at hand are the pleasant villages of Fornalutx and Binia-raix. Soller possesses an agreeable little hotel, *La Marina*, where the traveller will find more comfort than at any other *fonda* in the island outside of Palma.

East of Soller the towns which I think will be found most interesting are Pollensa, Alcudia, and perhaps Artá. It is pleasanter, however, not to stay in the dead towns of Pollensa or Alcudia, but at the cheerful ports close by, which are full of peace and idleness and beauty. I have already described the *fonda* at Puerto-Pollensa, and the reader may have inferred that, while it has many charms, it has no conveniences. It is really a

## MALLORCA

fishermen's *venta*, or café, rather than an inn. Its accommodation, limited to one bedroom with a window and one without, is quite impossible for a visitor with exacting tastes. Puerto-Alcudia is a decade or two ahead in the matter of civilisation, and possesses an hotel as well as a *fonda*. The *diligencia* from La Puebla, the terminus of the railway from Palma, draws up with strict impartiality in the middle of the road between the two, and the landlord of the one and the *fondista* of the other will dispute ceremoniously for the possession of your person and your property. If you prefer the company of Mallorquins, you will decide for the *fonda*; if that of commercial travellers from the peninsula, for the hotel.

As I have said, none of the towns of Mallorca except the capital lies actually upon the seashore, but there are one or two other ports where it is possible to stay if you can tolerate the very simple life. Porto Colon, the port of Felanitx, and Portocristo, the port of Manacor, are both on the south coast, but neither of them has the same spacious outlook as those in the bays of Pollensa and Alcudia. Capdepera lies among the hills at the easternmost extremity of the island, only a few minutes' walk from the sea, and possesses more than sufficient compensations for the somewhat indifferent comforts of the *fonda*. A short distance away from the village are the caves of Artá, the chief wonder of the island. My land-

## ANDRAITX

lord at Capdepera, who had never travelled further afield than Barcelona, told me that they were the most wonderful in the world. I never saw them, but I have reason to believe that he scarcely overstated the truth. The caves of Manacor (at Portocristo) are not so large, but I believe more beautiful.

In the corner of the island west of Palma there are one or two charming villages and some very magnificent coast scenery. Andraitx is the principal town in this district. The driving road from Palma (the drive takes about three hours) wanders among fir trees and olive groves, through which you catch enchanting glimpses of the bay. The town itself has sufficient accommodation, but no special interest. It is pleasantly situated, but too far—about four miles—from its port and the rugged coast. Andraitx lives in my memory chiefly as the starting-point of one of the most delightful expeditions that you can make in the island—the four hours' walk to Estallenchs. It is easy to lose your way just after leaving the town in striking over the shoulder of the hill, but as soon as you come out upon the northern coast you will find the single mule-track running along the face of the cliff. The *fonda* at Estallenchs is one of the most primitive in the island. Bañalbufar, four miles further on, possesses only a café, and it was only after an appeal *ad misericordiam* that I persuaded the proprietor to let me



## MALLORCA

sleep there. If, therefore, you shrink from the hospitality of the primitive Mallorquin *fonda*, it is advisable to arrange for a carriage to meet you at Estallenchs. In passing through Esporlas, some seven miles beyond Bañalbufar, do not omit to visit La Granja, which is one of the most charming country houses in Mallorca.

I hesitate to advise the traveller to make a sojourn at any of the inland towns of the island. Valldemosa is notable for its fine air and glorious prospects; Alaró is a pleasant little town at the foot of the northern mountains, on the side towards the plain; Artá has the beauty and interest of gently hilly country. At any of these three the traveller who is enamoured of quietness could stay with a moderate amount of comfort. But the towns of the plain are pleasanter to look at than to live in. They have, of course, their own intimate life, but their secrets—and some of them are surprising—are hidden from the passing stranger behind an inexpressive mask.

The cost of travelling and living in Mallorca is low. At Palma you may be asked ten pesetas a day (a peseta is the equivalent of a franc, about  $9\frac{1}{2}$ d.); at the Fonda de Mallorca I paid six. Six or seven and a half is the charge at the better hotels in such towns as Soller and Alcudia; but the *pension* terms at the average Mallorquin *fonda* are five pesetas. At some of the little ports you may live well for three pesetas a day—less than



## MODEST CHARGES

half a crown. I remember that at Capdepera, where I stayed from Friday night until two o'clock on Monday morning, my bill, which included the diligence fare from Capdepera to Manacor, amounted to less than six shillings. I found that the charge for a night's lodging, with supper at night and coffee and *ensaimada* in the morning, varied considerably; it was usually round about two and a half pesetas, and not infrequently I paid most for the worst fare. At Deyá I dined well and had a clean and spacious bedroom; it is true that in the evening my host occupied the only easy chair in the *patio*, but I forgave him when in the morning he presented me with a bill for one peseta and a half!

## MENORCA

If I were to be candid, I should say that it is scarcely worth your while to go to Menorca unless you dabble in archæology or are an impressionist painter in quest of effects of sunlight upon white-wash.

I don't know that my experience was peculiarly unhappy, but my general impression of the island was one of cheerlessness. Never have I felt so much in exile as when I was waiting for the steamer at Mahon. The place is habitable, even comfortable, but none the less depressing.

## MENORCA

The Hôtel Bustamente makes no attempt to conciliate tourists, but it is abundantly provided with those substantial comforts that are necessary to the ease of the commercial traveller. In many ways Menorca is more progressive than its sister islands—has it not a motor-bus upon its *carretera* and a republican deputy in the Cortes? Ciudadela is a pleasanter city than Mahon, but I should not care to stay there many days. There is a secluded little port on the north coast, Fornells, with an excellent *fonda* close by the shore, which seemed to me to be the happiest place in the island—except perhaps the sunny village of San Cristobal.

Unquestionably its prehistoric monuments form the main interest of the island. They consist of artificial caves, *talayots*, *nauetas*, *taulas*, and circles. The caves were constructed both for dwelling-places and sepulchres. They abound in almost every *barranco* or ravine in the southern part of the island. The *talayot* is a low tower of colossal proportions, in shape a truncated cone. It is constructed of vast rough-hewn stones; sometimes it is solid throughout, sometimes it is pierced by a low corridor leading to a central chamber. The *talayot* is not to be confused with the *atalaya*, the tower which is found all round the coast of Mallorca, and served in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to warn the inhabitants of the approach of the Corsairs. The fact that the

## PREHISTORIC REMAINS

*talayots* occur in groups and in positions which frequently afford no view of the sea makes it impossible that they should ever have been used for purposes of defence. Their purpose was sepulchral, and they bear an analogy with the funereal monuments of Asia and Egypt.

The *naueta* is a later form of *talayot*, elliptical in shape and of more skilled workmanship.

The *taula* is a T-shaped monument consisting of a horizontal block of stone resting upon a vertical column, recalling the sacred *tau* of India. It is frequently surrounded by a fragmentary circle, resembling the Druidical remains of Britain and Brittany. But modern research has disproved the Celtic origin of these monuments.

These remains are scattered over the southern half of the island, but they may all be visited from Mahon, San Cristobal, and Ciudadela. The cave-dwellings of Calas Covas—which alone almost repay a visit to Menorca—are situated about eight miles south-west of Mahon. The road via San Clemente, skirting various *talayots*, takes you within half an hour's walk of them. *Taulas* within reach of Mahon are those of Binimayut, close to San Luis; Telaty de dalt, three miles from Mahon, just south of the high road to Alayor; Torrauba d'en Salord and Torre d'en Gaumes, near Alayor.

Near San Cristobal are the caves of Binigaus, San José (*covas gardas*), Biniatzem, and the *tala-*

## MENORCA

*yots* of San Augustin (with chamber), Binicodrell, and Santa Clara.

The most important remains in the neighbourhood of Ciudadela are the *talayots* and caves of S' Hostal and the *naueta* of Els Tudons. They lie just to the south of the *carretera* leading to Mahon, about a quarter of an hour's walk from Ciudadela. More to the south are the *talayots* of Santa Rosa and San Carla.

## IBIZA

There is no doubt that Ibiza is the most picturesque because the most primitive of the Balearic Islands. Mallorca is infinitely richer in natural scenery and the interest of town-life. Menorca possesses its own peculiar associations, and antiquities of perhaps greater age, but scarcely of greater value or variety. Ibiza has an unobtrusive but taking beauty ; it is never grand, but it is never monotonous, and sometimes it has a strange air of remoteness. But its great charm is in the life which is lived there. It is nearest to Spain, but least continental. Old customs and costumes and manners, which vanish at the touch of modern civilisation, have survived there. For this reason it is preferable to visit Ibiza at the season of some important *fiesta*—Easter, Corpus Christi in May, or the feast of St. John in June.



## THE CITY OF IBIZA

The race is the simplest minded and kindest hearted which it is possible to find. However fierce their quarrels among themselves—and for the most part they are produced only by the ebullition of youthful passion—the inhabitants are the soul of kindness to the *forastero*. It is sometimes impossible to persuade them to take any money for services rendered, even for refreshment at a *fonda*. But this glimpse of a more primitive life has to be paid for in the discomfort of the accommodation. In the capital it is indifferent, and in the villages insufficient. The only hotel in the capital is the *fonda* of Sebastian Roig on the quay. Most of the bedrooms are divided into three dark and ill-ventilated cubicles; the *pension* terms are six pesetas a day.

The city of Ibiza—though its appearance is that of a fishing village it has the status of a city—is not rich in objects of interest. Just outside the walls is the Phœnician necropolis of Ereso. It contains about two thousand tombs, into some of which you can enter, passing through a labyrinth of low chambers and corridors. An hour's drive from the town, at the southern extremity of the island, are the *Salinas*, or salt-pans—a number of shallow basins covering about six square miles beside which the snow-like salt is piled in gigantic, glittering heaps. Some two miles to the north of Ibiza, at a little distance to the right of the *carretera* leading to San Juan

## IBIZA

Bautista, stands the church of *Nuestra Señora de Jesus*, which contains the only important painting in the three islands, a fourteenth-century altarpiece of the Valencian school.

The three principal villages in the island are San Antonio on the west coast, Santa Eulalia on the east, and San Juan Bautista in the north. All of them are within easy driving distance of the capital—nine, ten, and fourteen miles respectively. It is not therefore really necessary to spend a night at San Juan and sleep, as I did, behind a curtain in a café while the priest and half a dozen cheerful peasants poison the air with the evil-smelling *pota*, a rank tobacco that is grown in the island. If, however, you wish to see more of the western part of the island, which I think is the most beautiful—the region in which lie the hamlets of Sta. Ines, S. Miguel, and S. Matteo—I should advise you to take up your quarters in the clean little port of San Antonio, the ancient Puerto-Magno where the Emperor Charles V, with his fifteen galleys, anchored when on his way to attack the pirates of Algiers in 1541. There you will find a very simple but passable *fonda*—*Can Portas*—kept by an aged widow. The path to Sta. Ines, to which you can walk in about two hours, wanders among picturesque and lonely valleys. The cave of Sta. Ines, a mile north of San Antonio, contains an ancient Christian catacomb church. The Moors also used it as

## THE CLIMATE

a place of refuge, and you can, if you wish, bring away armfuls of fragments of Moorish pottery.

The object of visiting Formentera is rather for the pleasure of sailing across the strait in a *falucha* than for the interest of the island itself. The voyage, however, has its risks, as sometimes the *falucha* does not return the same day, and there is always the chance of being becalmed. A small steamer makes the return journey three days a week.

The climate of the Balearic Islands is ideal. The variations of temperature are less extreme than in the peninsula. It is really possible to visit the islands in spring, summer, autumn, or winter. Of course the summer is hot. From the middle of June onwards through July and August the heat is perhaps too great for comfort in Palma and the plain of Mallorca, but it is never unpleasantly severe on the northern coast. In January and February there may be a certain amount of rain, but no continuous bad weather. Spring is the most favoured season, but the months of September, October, and November, with the autumn colour and the dry bracing air, are equally delightful.

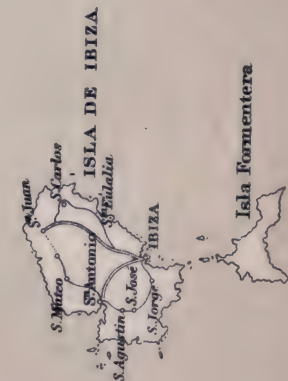
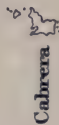




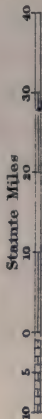
ISLA DE MENORCA

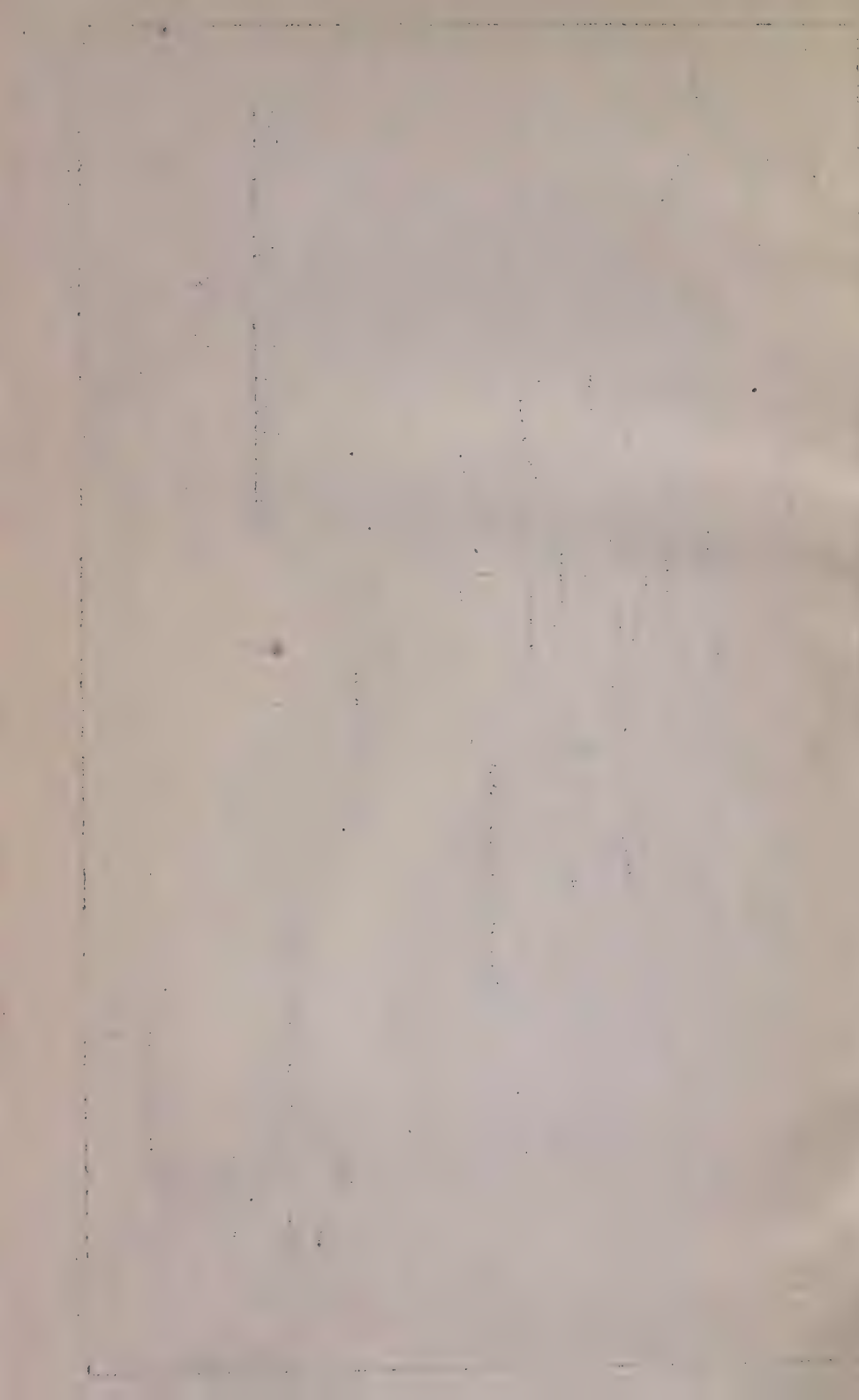


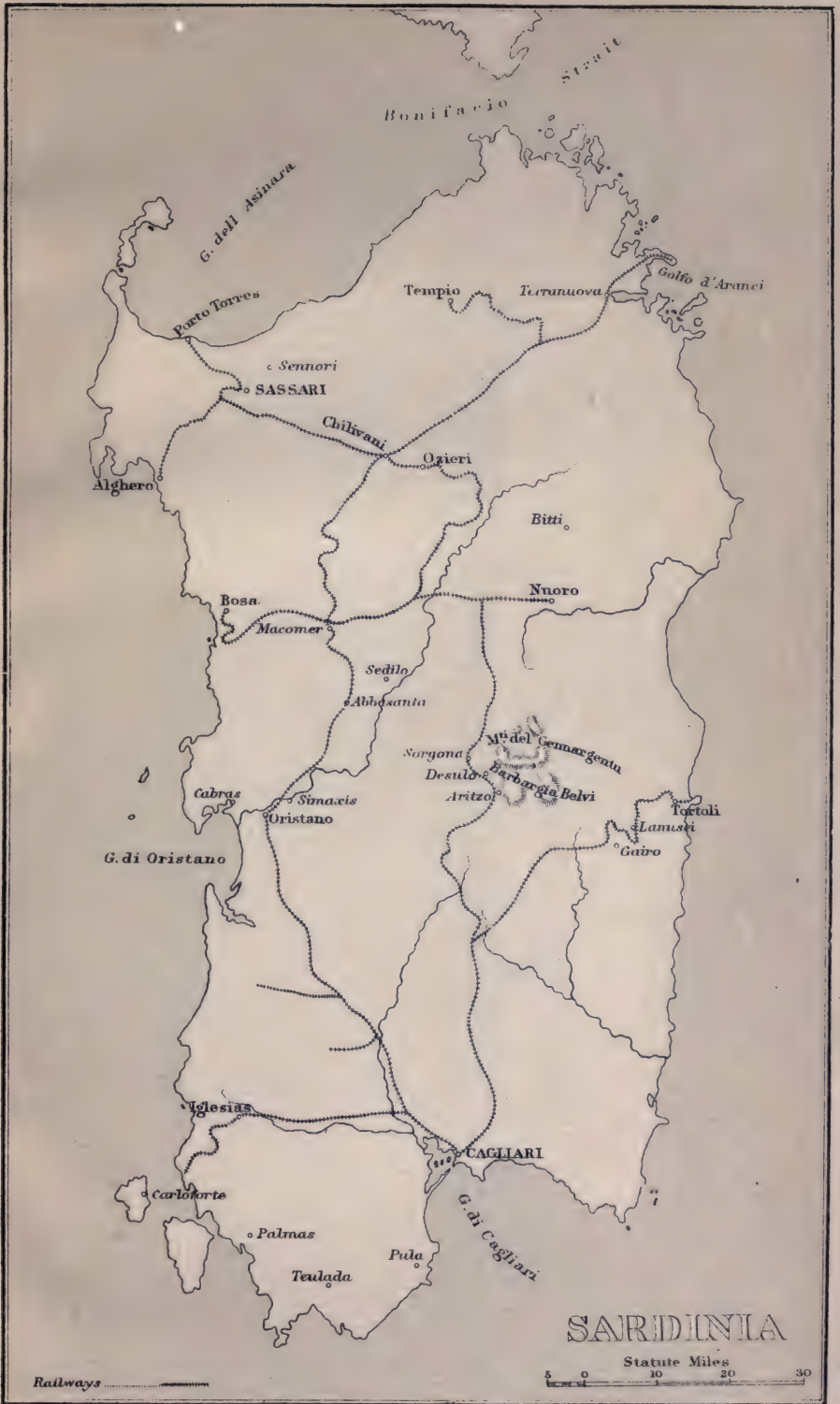
ISLA DE MALLORCA



BALEARIC ISLANDS

















UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
LIBRARY

Do not

remove

the card

from this

Pocket.

Acme Library Card Pocket

Under Pat. "Ref. Index File."

Made by LIBRARY BUREAU, Boston

