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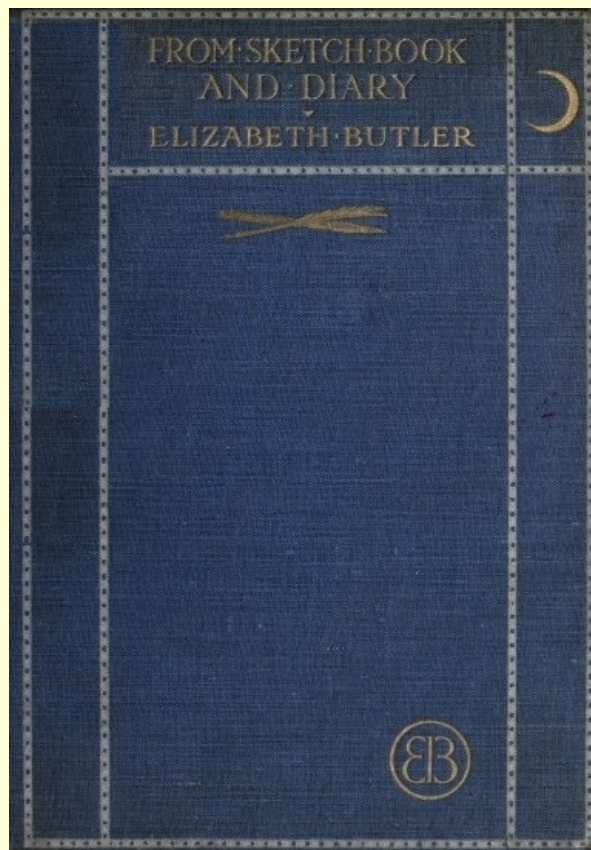
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FROM SKETCH-BOOK AND DIARY
BY THE SAME AUTHOR

LETTERS FROM THE HOLY LAND

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THE HOUR OF PRAYER, A SOUVENIR OF WADY HALFA

FROM SKETCH-BOOK AND DIARY

BY

ELIZABETH BUTLER

WITH TWENTY-EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR
AND TWENTY-ONE SMALL SKETCHES IN THE TEXT
BY THE AUTHOR



LONDON
ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK, SOHO SQUARE, W.
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1909

Dedication

TO MY SISTER, ALICE MEYNELL

I HAVE an idea of writing to you, most sympathetic Reader, of certain days and nights of my travels that have impressed themselves with peculiar force upon my memory, and that have mostly rolled by since you and I set out, at the Parting of the Ways, from the paternal roof-tree, within three months of each other.

First, I want to take you to the Wild West Land of Ireland, to a glen in Kerry, where, so far, the tourist does not come, and then on to remote Clew Bay, in the County Mayo.

After that, come with me up the Nile in the time that saw the close of the Gordon Relief Expedition, when the sailing "Dahabieh," most fascinating of house-boats, was still the vogue for those who were not in a hurry, and when again the tourist (of that particular year) was away seeking safer picnic grounds elsewhere.

Then to the Cape and the voyage thither, which may not sound alluring, but where you may find something to smile at.

I claim your indulgence, wherever I ask you to accompany me, for my painter's literary crudities; but nowhere do I need it more than in Italy, for you have trodden that field with me almost foot by foot. The veil to which I trust for softening those asperities elsewhere must fall asunder there.

I have made my Diary, and in the case of the Egyptian chapters, my letters to our mother, the mainsprings from which to draw these reminiscences.

BANSHA CASTLE, *July* 1909.

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OUR ESCORT INTO GLENARAGH

I

IN THE WEST OF IRELAND



My diary must introduce you to Glenaragh, where I saw a land whose beauty was a revelation to me; a new delight unlike anything I had seen in my experiences of the world's loveliness. To one familiarized from childhood with Italy's peculiar charm, a sudden vision of the Wild West of Ireland produces a sensation of freshness and surprise difficult adequately to describe.

"—June '77.—At Killarney we left the train and set off on one of the most enchanting carriage journeys I have ever made, passing by the lovely Lough Leane by a road hedged in on both sides with masses of the richest May blossom. For some distance the scenery was wooded and soft, almost too perfect in composition of wood, lake, river, and mountain; but by degrees we left behind us those scenes of finished beauty, and entered upon tracts of glorious bog-land which, in the advancing evening, impressed me beyond even my heart's desire by their breadth of colour and solemn tones. I was beginning to taste the salt of the Wilds.

"The scenery grew more rugged still, and against ranges of distant mountains jutted out the strong grey and brown rocks, the stone cairns and cabins of the Wild West land.

"To be a figure-painter and full of interest in mankind does not mean that one cannot enjoy, from the depths of one's heart, such scenes as these, where what human habitations there are, are so like the stone heaps that lie over the face of the land that they are scarcely distinguishable from them. When observed they only convey to the mind the sense of the feebleness of man, overpowered as he is here by the might of the primeval landscape. This human atom stands timidly at his black cabin door to see the stranger pass, often half-witted through privation; or he silently tills the little patch of land he has borrowed from the strong and barbarous earth that yields him so little.

"The mighty 'Carran Thual,' one of the mountain group which rises out of Glenaragh and dominates the whole land of Kerry, was ablaze with burning heather, its peak sending up a glorious column of smoke which spread out at the top for miles and miles and changed its exquisite smoke tints every minute as the sun sank lower. As we reached the rocky pass that took us by the wild and remote Lough Acoose that sun had gone down behind an opposite mountain, and the blazing heather glowed brighter as the twilight deepened, and circles of fire played fiercely and weirdly on the mountain-side. Our Glen gave the 'Saxon lady' its grandest illumination on her arrival.

"Wild strange birds rose from the bracken as we passed, and flew strongly away over lake and mountain torrent, and the little black Kerry cows all watched us go by with ears pricked and heads inquiringly raised. The last stage of the journey had a brilliant *finale*. A herd of young horses was in our way in the narrow road, and the creatures careered before us, unable or too stupid to turn aside into the ditches by the roadside to let us through. We could not head them, and for fully a mile did those shaggy wild things caper and jump ahead, their manes flying out wildly with the glow from the west shining through them. Some imbecile cows soon joined them in the stampede, for no imaginable reason, unless they enjoyed the fright of being pursued, and the ungainly progress of those recruits was a sight to behold,—tails in the air and horns in the dust. The troop led the way right into the eye of the sunset. With this escort we entered Glenaragh.

.....

"—June 1877.—We rode in to-night after a long excursion amidst the mountains of this wild land of Kerry, rode down into the glen where our little inn stands in a clump of birch and arbutus trees. That northern light which in these high latitudes and at this season carries the after-light of the sunset on into the dawn, lighted our path for the last hour with surprising power. Were we sufficiently far north, of course, the sun itself would not dip below the horizon at all, but here we have only the upper portion of his aureole from his setting to his rising. Oh! the wild freedom of these mountain paths, the scent of the cabin turf fires, the round west wind rolling through the heather; what cool wells of memories they fill up for the thirsty traveller in desert places far away. That west wind! This is the first land it has swept with its wings since it left the coasts of Labrador. For purity, for freshness, for generosity, give me the Wild West wind of Ireland.

"'Carran Thual' is still on fire; it signals each night back to the northern light across the glen in a red glare of burning heather. The moon, now in her first quarter, looks green-gold by contrast with all this red of sky and flame, and altogether our glen gives us, these nights, such a display of earthly and heavenly splendour that it seems one should be a spectator all night of so much beauty. And to this concert of colour runs the subtle accompaniment of rushing water, for all these mountains are laced with silvery torrents leaping down to the lakes and rivers that reflect the glory of the sky. Glenaragh! loveliest of wild valleys, where is the poet that should make thee the theme of his songs?

"Coming through 'Windy Gap' in this illuminated gloaming we met a lonely horseman riding fast, a rope for his bridle, his pony very shaggy. He passed us over the rocks and rolling stones, and, looking back, we saw his bent figure jet black against the west for a moment, ere he dipped down through the 'Gap' out of sight. We knew who he was. Some peasant was dying on the mountain-side beyond, and the priest was anxious to be in time with the Viaticum.

"A strange little creature came out of the kitchen of the inn to see us after supper, and I made the acquaintance of a Leprechaun. Tiny, grey, bald little manikin; a 'fairy,' the people call him. I do not want to know why they are like that. I would rather leave them mysterious and unexplained.

.....

"The people speak Gaelic here, amongst themselves, and the priest preaches in it in the little chapel with the mud floor up on the hill over the torrent. The language and the torrent seem to speak alike, hurrying headlong.



"A CHAPEL-OF-EASE," CO. KERRY

"But the chapel! Shall I ever forget the tub of holy water, on my first Sunday, placed before the rickety little altar on the mud floor, where the people, on coming in, splashed the water up into their faces? The old women had all brought big bottles from their homes in far-away glens to fill at the tub, and nothing could surpass the comicality of their attitudes as they stooped over their pious business, all wearing the hooded cloak that made them look as broad as they were long. One old lady, in her nice white cap, monopolized the tub an unconscionably long time, for, catching sight of her wind-tossed tresses in that looking-glass, she finished her devout ablutions by smoothing her few grey hairs with her moistened fingers into tidy bands, with alternate signs of the cross. The windows were all broken, and the men and boys stuffed the holes with their hats and caps to keep out the mountain blast.

"Last Sunday, a very hot day, the tub happened to be placed outside the door, and it was well my horse was not tied up within reach, or a former catastrophe might have been repeated, and a 'blessed baist' have carried me home. The heat in the rickety little gallery, where the 'quality' have their seats, was such that I went out into the open air and followed the rest of the service with a rock for my hassock, and two rosy pigs toddling about me in that friendly way I notice as characteristic of all the animals in these parts. They seem to feel they are members of the family, and you see calves, goats, pigs, and donkeys sauntering in and out of the cabin doors in a free-and-easy harmony with the human beings which takes my fancy greatly. But the beasts are by far the happiest; their lives seem passed in perfect contentment and satisfaction, whereas the poor human animals have a hard struggle for existence in this stony and difficult land of Kerry.

"The other day when W. and I dismounted at a cabin door on a wild mountain that holds, still higher up, a little dark lake which the people declare has no bottom to it, and on the shores of which 'worms as big as a horse' come out and bellow in the evenings, the gaunt pig that seemed to act watch-dog charged at me like a wild boar and sent me home in 'looped and windowed raggedness.' I never thought to find excess of zeal in a pig! The inmates of the cabin could not do enough for us to make up for such want of reticence.

"On one occasion at church in Tipperary, I noticed a rather satanic goat come pattering up the church and occupy an empty pew, where he lay down with perfect self-complacency and remained quiescent, chewing the cud, while we knelt; but each time the congregation stood up, up jumped the goat, his pale eyes and enormous horns just appearing over the high front of the pew. Then as we knelt again he would subside also, till he was startled to his feet once more by the rustle of the people rising, and then his wild head was again visible over the top of the pew, staring about him. Not a single person took any notice of the weird creature or seemed to think him out of place or at all funny. And so he continued to rise and fall with the rest to the end.

"Our chapel here is too small for the congregation that streams in from places as far as fifteen miles away among the mountains, and on one pouring wet Sunday I saw the strangest rendering of what is called 'a chapel-of-ease.' Not much 'ease' there, for some dozen men and youths who could find no place inside were kneeling about the door in running water, with a stone placed under each knee. Every day I see some incident or episode which has for me a surprise and all the charm of a new and striking experience. I feel more 'abroad' in this country than I do on the Continent.

"See, again, this little scene. A friend journeying to our inn and missing the road got belated in the defiles of the 'Reeks.' Dismounting at one of those mud cabins, which, at a little distance, are indistinguishable from their rocky surroundings, to ask the way, he was invited inside and offered a meal. The light was waning, so two little girls stood on either side of the stranger, each holding a bit of lighted candle as he sat at table. These wild-eyed and ragged little creatures made a pretty pair of dining-table candlesticks! I wish I could have seen them in the dim twilight of the black, smoke-dimmed cabin interior, their faces lighted by the candle flame.

"The beauty of the children here is a constant pleasure to me. We are here in the land of blue eyes and black lashes, or golden ones, when the hair, as it so frequently is, is ruddy. The young women are quite beautiful. I wish a painter of female beauty could have seen the girl we passed to-day who was minding some calves in a bit of bog-land bordered with birch-trees. It was a symphony of green; her head shawl was green plaid, her petticoat another tone of green, the background and all her surroundings gave every cool and delicious variation of green, and her ruddy limbs and red-gold hair, tossed by the breeze and shone through by the sun, looked richer in colour by the contrast. Her great blue eyes looked shyly at us and the shawl soon covered her laughing face. What a sweet picture, 'In the Green Isle'!

"Every day I am more and more struck with the light-heartedness and gaiety of the animals. Whether it is

emphasized by the poverty-stricken and quiet, saddened, demeanour of the human beings in these parts I cannot tell, but certainly the beasts seem to have the best of it. As to the dogs that belong to the mud cabins, never have I seen such jolly dogs, full of comic ways, especially when in puppy-hood, and all so valiant in confronting us as we near their strongholds. But on our near approach that puppy who looks mighty fierce afar off usually bolts under some door and sticks there. Then the pigs, who generally are less valiant than our wild boar of Lough Cluen, seized with apparent panic, rush round and round in the yard, and the flurried ducks that scuttle from under our horses' hoofs end by falling on their sides in the ditches—surely all in fun? And invariably the cows and calves by the way-side prefer to be pursued along the roads, and keep up a splendid burst of galloping with tails in the air for miles before a tumble happening to one of them suggests a movement to the rear. All the lower creatures are 'jolly dogs' here, and only man is care-worn."

In the autumn we came back to our well-loved glen, and I gathered materials there for my first *married* Academy picture—the 'Recruits for the Connaught Rangers.' W. found me two splendid 'bog-trotters' for models. The elder of the two had the finer physique, and it was explained to me that this was owing to his having been reared on herrings as well as potatoes, whereas the other, who lived up in the mountains, away from the sea, had not known the luxury of the herring. I wish we could get more of these men into our army. W. at that time was developing suggestions for forming a Regiment of Irish Guards, and I was enthusiastic in my adhesion to such a project and filling the imaginary ranks with big men like my two models. However, he was some twenty-three years too soon, and the honour had to be won for Ireland through yet another big war.

CHAPTER II

COUNTY MAYO IN 1905



I WISH you would make a summer tour to Mayo. It is simple; yet what a change of scene, of sensations, of thoughts one secures by this simple and direct journey—Euston, Holyhead, Dublin, Mulranny. You travel right across Ireland, getting a very informing vista of the poverty and stagnation of those Midland counties till your eyes greet the glorious development of natural beauty on the confines of the sea-girt Western land. I went there tired from London and came on a scene of the most perfect repose imaginable, with the sound of the motor buses still buzzing in my ears.

Mulranny is supremely healthy—a place of rosy cheeks and sunburn, bracing yet genial, clear-aired, majestic in its scenery, unspoilt. As you near your journey's end and enter Mayo the change in the scenery from the emptiness of Roscommon develops rapidly. Magnificent mountains rise on the horizon, and the grandeur of the landscape grows into extraordinary beauty as the train rounds into Clew Bay. The great cone of Croagh Patrick rises in striking isolation at first, and then the surrounding mountains, one by one, join it in lovely outlines against the fresh *clean* sky. It was a beautiful afternoon when I was introduced to this memorable landscape, and the waters of the Bay were quite calm. After sunset the crescent

moon gave the culminating charm to the lovely scene in the west, while to the south the red planet Mars flamed above Croagh Patrick, and all this beauty was mirrored in the Bay. What an emancipation from the fret and fuss of little Piccadilly in a hot July to find oneself before these mountain forms and colours that have not changed since the cooling of the earth. You might travel farther a great way and not find such a virgin land.



CROAGH PATRICK

And there is Achill Island, a one-day's excursion from Mulranny, poignantly melancholy in its beauty and remoteness beyond anything I have seen in the west. Achill has often been described; it holds the traveller's attention with a wild appeal to his heart; but I don't know that one little detail of that land "beyond the beyond" has ever been described. It is Achill's mournful little Pompeii, a village of the dead, on a bare hillside, which we passed

one day on our way to an unfrequented part of the island. This village was deserted in the awful famine year of '47, some of the inhabitants creeping away in fruitless search of work and food to die farther afield, others simply sinking down on the home sod that could give them nothing but the grave. In the bright sunshine its roofless cabins and grass-grown streets looked more heart-breaking than they might have done in dismal rain. I wish I could have made a sketch of it as I saw it that day—a subject strongly attracting the attention of the mind rather than the eye. Pictorial beauty there was none.

Everywhere in this country there is that heart-piercing contrast between natural beauty and human adversity—that companionship of sun and sorrow. But the light and the darkness seem blended by the unquestioning faith of these rugged Christians into a solemn unity and harmony before which any words of mine sound only like so much dilettantism.

See here another bit of chapel interior. A rough, plain little building, too formless to be picturesque, packed with peasant men, women, and children. Where but in Ireland could such a scene take place as I witnessed there? The priest, before the beginning of the service, gave a tremendous swish of holy water to the congregation with a mop out of a zinc pail, from the altar. He had previously heard nearly half the congregation's confessions, men, women, boys, and girls kneeling in turn beside his chair at one side of the altar, without any sort of screen. I wondered, as they pressed round him, that they did not overhear each other, but indeed I reflected that would be "no matter whatever," as these people must have but little to tell!

The server ran a match along the earthen floor to light the two guttering, unequal candles on the altar, and at the end of Mass he produced the mop and zinc pail again. *Swish* went the holy water once more from the mop, wielded by the athletic sword-arm of the gigantic young priest. For fear the nearer people should have been but poorly sprinkled under that far-reaching arc of water, which went to the very end wall of the chapel, he soused the mop again with a good twist and gave everybody in the front benches a sharp whack full in their faces, tactfully leaving us out. They received it with beaming and grateful smiles.

There are wonderful studies of old men's and women's heads here full of that character which in the more "educated" parts of Ireland the School Board seems to be rubbing out, and I was delighted to see the women and girls wearing the head-shawls and white caps and the red petticoats that charmed me in Kerry in '77. The railway is sure to bring the dreadful "Frenchy" hat here in time, and then good-bye to the comely appearance of these women. Their wild beauty undergoes an extraordinary change under the absurd hat and feathers—these winsome colleens then lose all their charm.

Yet I must thank this same railway for having brought us to this haven of rest, right up to the doors of a charming, very modern hotel, on quite different lines from the dear little inn that fascinated me in the old Glenaragh days. In its way it is fascinating too, for here you have all the up-to-date amenities in the very heart of the wildest country you could wish for. The electric light is generated by the mountain streams and the baths filled from the glorious bay that lies below the hotel terraces, a never-failing delight in all its moods of sun and shadow, wind and calm.

Sad it is to see so many cabins deserted. The strength of the country is ebbing away. The few people that are left are nice and wholesome in mind and manner; they have the quiet urbanity of the true peasant all the world over. They remind me of the Tuscan in this particular, but, of course, they have not his light-heartedness. More seriousness, I should think, these Irish have. I was sketching sheep, for a contemplated picture, in the evenings on the lovely marshes by the sea, and one evening a widow, left completely lonely in her little cabin on the heights above by the departure for America of her last child, came down to fetch home her solitary sheep from amongst the others, and I told her I thought these creatures were leading a very happy life. "Yes," she answered, pausing for a moment and looking down on the flock, "and they are without sin."



CLEW BAY, CO. MAYO

At the ringing of the Angelus the work in the fields, the bogs, the potato patches stops till the words of St. Luke's Gospel have been repeated, just as we remember them said in Italy. It was a surprise—and one of great interest to me—when I first saw peasants saying the Angelus under a northern sky.

My studies of the wild mountain sheep on the marshes came to an abrupt close. I was reposing under a rock (it was well on in July) with palette and panels ready, waiting for the sunset and its after-glow, to get final precious notes of colour upon the fleeces. One particular sheep had been a very useful model. It ambled in a graceful way on three legs and we called it "Pacer." I became aware of an opaque body rising between my closed eyes and the sun,

and looking up I beheld the head of "Pacer" peering at me over the edge of the rock over my head. But what had happened to "Pacer's" neck? Good gracious! I jumped up and beheld a shorn "Pacer" and all the flock in the same lamentable condition. It had all happened in twenty-four hours.

I want to bring before your mind two little rocky islands with green summits off the coast of Clare, not far from here. Of all the wind-swept little islands none could be more wind-swept. On one, the smallest, I heard that a ferocious and unmanageable billy-goat was deposited as a useless member of the community, and one night he was blown out to sea—a good riddance. On the other you perceive, through the spray, little nodules on the turf—the graves of unbaptized infants. And the sea-gulls along the cliffs are for ever crying like legions of children.

.....

By returning from Mullranny by way of Tipperary and the Rosslare route to England you can voyage down the Shannon and have an experience not lightly to be foregone. This is the "lordly Shannon," a great wide, slowly-flowing and majestic river of dark, clear, bluish water—blue shot with slate. You sit at the bows of the little steambot which takes you from Athlone to Killaloe, so that neither smoke nor screw interferes with your enjoyment of the lovely scenes you are to pass through. If the time is July (*the* time to choose) you are at once greeted on clearing the little grey town of Athlone with the most exquisite scent from the level banks which form two wide belts of creamy meadow-sweet all the way to the end, at Lough Derg. These belts are interrupted, once only, by the lock at Shannon Bridge, that little gathering of houses and gaunt dismantled barracks and breastworks built in the days of the threatened French invasion. Near here lived Charlotte Brontë's husband till his death only the other day.

You will see in the Shannon a mighty waterway for commerce, left to the wild things that haunt it; and it has haunted me ever since that July day on which I saw it with a sense of regret that the condition of Ireland makes such a river out of scale with the requirements of the country. It flows for the wild birds, the cattle, the fishes, and for its own pleasure; and it flowed for mine that day, for I let no phase of it escape me and gladly added its sonorous name to the long list of those of the great rivers of the world I have already seen.

We hardly saw a soul along the banks, but many kinds of aquatic birds, flying, diving, and swimming, enlivened the voyage with their funny ways, scurrying out of the track of the puffing little steamer. Along the whole course of the great stream there stood at regular intervals, planted in more hopeful days, navigation posts, marking the channel for the ships that never come, and on these scarlet signs perched black cormorants eyeing us like vultures. The herons rose slowly from the meadow-sweet and the sedges, with their long flapping wings; the cattle standing in the water followed us with their mild eyes. It was all beautiful, mournful, eloquent, and when the ruins of Clonmacnoise hove in sight I heard the spirit of Ireland speaking to me from the grave.

Clonmacnoise! A mere curious name to us in England. Perhaps nowhere, even in depopulated Ireland, can a more desolate, abandoned plot of land than this be seen. And yet this great monastery and university, founded in A.D. 544, and at the height of her renown in the eighth century while our country was in a very immature state, was a European centre to which scholars on the Continent came to study; which was quoted and referred to by them as a conspicuous authority, and which for long was in what I might call brisk communication with the centres of learning abroad, if "brisk" was not too bizarre a word in such a place to-day. A more mournful oblivion never fell on any once flourishing centre of active thought and teaching.



A LITTLE IRISH RIVER

The slow havoc of time amongst these seven remaining little churches and blunt round towers was one day accelerated by Cromwell's gunpowder, which has left the "Guest House" of the monastery a heap of ruins split into ugly shapes quite out of keeping with the rest.

As the grey group passed away from sight I thought I had never known more eloquent silence than that which enfolds the ruins bearing the sounding name of Clonmacnoise.

Will the electric chain ever be linked up again that carried Ireland's intellect and mental energy to the Continent in those remote times, and round again from the great sources of learning there, with fresh material to enrich her own store?

You will have the wish to "Come back to Erin, Mavourneen," after making this little tour. To me Ireland is very appealing, though I owe her a grudge for being so tantalizing and evasive for the painter. The low clouds of her skies cause such rapid changes of sun and shadow over her landscapes that it requires feats of technical agility to catch them on the wing beyond my landscape powers. My only chance is to have unlimited time and thus be able to wait a week, if necessary, for the particular effect to come round again. An artist I heard of thought he had "bested" the Irish weather and its wiles when he set up this clever system: six canvasses he spread out before him on the ground in a row, each with a given arrangement of light and shade sketched out ready. But when the psychological moment arrived he was so flurried, that while he was wildly running his hand up and down the row of canvasses for the right one he could never find it in time.

A nice dance you are led, sketching in Ireland, altogether! You are, for instance, intent on dashing down the plum-like tones of a distant mountain, when lo! that mountain which in its purple mystery seemed some fifteen miles away, in a moment flashes out into such vivid green that, as the saying is here, "you might shake hands with it," so close has it come. Even its shape is changed, for peaks and buttresses start forth in the sunburst where you imagined unbroken slopes a few minutes before. Shadowed woods spring into dark prominence by the sudden illumination of the fields behind them and as suddenly are engulfed in the golden haze of a shaft of light that pierces the very clouds whose shadows had a minute before given them such a startling prominence on the light background. Unsuspected lovelinesses leap forth while those we saw before are snatched away, and the sunlight for ever wanders up and along the mountain sides, as some one has finely said, "like the light from a heavenly lantern."

What those changes from beauty to beauty do towards sunset I leave you to imagine. I have never seen Ireland at all worthily painted. I think we ought to leave her to her poets and to the composers of her matchless music.



II

EGYPT



CHAPTER I

CAIRO

To the East! What a thrill of pleasure those words caused me when they meant that I was really off for Egypt. The East has always had for me an intense fascination, and it is one of the happiest circumstances of my life that I should have had so much enjoyment of it.

My childish sketch-books, as you remember, are full of it, and so are my earliest scribblings. To see the reality of my fervid imaginings, therefore, was to satisfy in an exquisite way the longing of all my life.

The Gordon expedition was my opportunity, and it was a bold and happy conception of W.'s that of my going out with the two eldest little ones to join him on the Nile when the war should be over. I may say I—and the British Army—had the Nile pretty well to ourselves, for few tourists went up the year I was there. But I had to wait some time at Cairo and at Luxor before all trouble had been put an end to by the battle of Ginniss, which closed the recrudescence of rebellion that burst out after the great Khartoum campaign.

The emotion on seeing the East for the first time can never be felt again. The surprise can never be repeated, and holds a type of pleasure different from that which one feels on revisiting it, as I have so often done since.

One knows the "gorgeous East" at first only in pictures; one takes it on trust from Delacroix, Decamps, Gérôme, Müller, Lewis, and a host of others. You arrive, and their pictures suddenly become breathing realities, and in time you learn, with exquisite pleasure, that their most brilliant effects and groups are no flights of fancy but faithful transcripts of every-day reality.



IN A CAIRO BAZAAR

But at first you ask, "Can those figures in robes and turbans be really going about on ordinary business? Are they bringing on that string of enormous camels to carry real hay down that crowded alley; are those bundles in black and in white wrappers, astride of white asses caparisoned in blue and silver, merely matter-of-fact ladies of the harem taking their usual exercise? That Pasha's curvetting white Arab horse's tail is dyed a tawny red, and what is this cinder-coloured, bare-headed, jibbering apparition, running along, clothed in rattling strings of sea-shells and foaming at the mouth? A *real* fanatic? That water-seller by Gérôme has moved; he is selling a cup of water to that gigantic negro in the white robe and yellow slippers, and is pocketing the money quite in an ordinary way. And there is a praying man by Müller, not arrested in mid-prayer, but going through all the periods with the prescribed gestures, his face to the East, and the declining sun adding an ever-deepening flush to the back of his amber-coloured robe."

It takes two or three days to rid oneself of the idea that the streets are parading their colours and movement and their endless variety of Oriental types and costumes for your diversion only, on an open-air stage.

Cairo in '85, '86, was only at the beginning of its mutilations by occidentalism, and the Oriental *cachet* was dominant still. To sit on the low shady terrace of the old Shepheard's hotel under the acacias and watch the pageant of the street below was to me an endless delight.

The very incongruity of the drama unrolling itself before one's eyes had a charm of its own. Look at that Khedivial officer in sky-blue, jerkily riding his pretty circus Arab. There follows him a majestic and most genuine Bedouin in camel's hair burnoos, deigning not the turn of an eyelash as he passes our frivolous throng on the terrace; two Greek priests, their long hair gathered up in knots under the tall black cap and flowing veil, equal him in quiet dignity, and a mendicant friar rattles his little money-box, like an echo of the water-seller's cups over the way, as a hint to our charity. An Anglo-Indian officer of high degree is driven up to our steps in a 'bus under a pile of baggage. He has just arrived from India and is impressively escorted by various Sikhs, whose immense *puggarees* are conceived in a totally different spirit from that of the native turbans. A British hussar, smart as only a British soldier can be, trots by on a wiry Syrian horse; a cab full of Highlanders out for a spree bumps along the unpaved roadway. I confess I was disappointed with the effect of our honoured British red. What did it look like where the red worn by the natives was always of the most harmonious tones!

See that string of little donkeys cheerily toddling along, all but extinguished under their loads of sugar-canes that sweep the ground with their long leaves; humble peasant donkeys, meeting a flashing brougham with windows rigidly closed, through which the almond eyes of veiled ladies of some high Pasha's harem glance up at us and take us all in in that devouring sweep of vision. Double syces run before such equipages.

French bugles tell us an Egyptian regiment is coming, and, meeting it, will go by with a dull rumble a string of English baggage-waggons drawn by mules and driven by Nubians, escorted by British soldiers in dusty khaki uniforms; stout fellows going to the front, a good many of them to stay there—under the sand.

About 5.30 P.M. weird music and flaring torches brings us out again on the terrace, and we see a tumultuous crowd of pilgrims just arrived from Mecca by the five o'clock Suez train. They gather the crowd by their unearthly din and sweep it along with them. Beggars, flower-sellers, snake-charmers, tourists, and touts are all rolling along in a continuous buzz of various noises. Perhaps the full escort of cavalry jingles past our point of observation and the native crowd salutes the Khedive. Not so the British officers on the terrace, who keep their seats.

But what was all this to diving into the old city, and in a ten minutes' donkey ride to find oneself in the Middle Ages; in the real, breathing, moving, sounding life of the Arabian Nights? Then when inclined to come back to our time and its comforts, which I am far from despising, ten minutes' return ride and the glimpse into the old life of the East became as a vision. For what I call the pageant of the street in front of Shepheard's was much too much mixed with modernity to allow of so complete a transformation of ideas.

The bazaars of Cairo have been painted and written about more than those of any other Oriental city. The idea of my having "a try" at them seems to come a little late! But *if* it is true that, as some croakers say, Old Cairo is gradually dying, I feel impelled to lay one flower of appreciation beside the grave which is ere long to close.

What a treat, to put it in that way, it was to rove about in the reality of the true East, to meet beauty of form and colour and light and shade and movement wherever one's eyes turned, without being brought up with a nasty jar by some modern hideosity or other. This was contentment. You know what a bit of colour in sun or luminous shade does

for me. Think of my feelings when I walked through the narrow streets where the rays of the sun slanted down through gaps in the masonry, or, as in some, through chinks in the overhead matting—now on a white turban, now on a rose-coloured robe relieved against the rich dark background of some cavernous open doorway, now on a bit of brass-work. The soft tones of the famous Carpet Bazaar in noon-day twilight, with that richness of colour that tells you the invisible sunshine is somewhere, fulfilled—yea, over-filled—my expectations, and close by in real working trim were the brass-workers tinkering and tapping musically, the while smoking their hubble-bubbles in very truth. The goldsmiths, in their own particular alley, were sitting in the rich chiaroscuro of their little shops waiting for me.

Added to those feasts for the eyes were the sounds which pictures could not give me—the warning shouts of the donkey-and camel-drivers, the “by your leave” in Arabic, followed by the shuffling sound of hoof and foot in the soft tan; the tinkling of the water-sellers’ brass saucers; the cries, like wild songs in the minor, of hawkers of all kinds of things. Then the scents, also unpaintable. Incense, gums, tan, ripe fruit, wood-smoke. And the smells? Ah, yes, well—the smells, goatly and otherwise. They were all bound up together in that entirety which I would not have deleted.

There was one particular angle of street in front of I forget what ripe old mosque, before which I would have liked to establish myself all day. The two streams of passers-by, human and animal, ceaselessly jostling each other, came at one particular hour into a shaft of sunlight just at the turn where I could see them in perspective. Now a splendid figure in yellow robe and white turban, accentuating the streak of gold to perfection, occupied the centre of the composition and I would make a mental note: “daffodil yellow and white in intense sunlight; dull crimson curtain in shade behind; man in half-shade in dark brown, boy in indigo in reflected light”—when in the shaft of light now appeared a snow-white robe and rosy turban, putting out the preceding scheme, till a *hadji* in a turban of soft bluey-green and pale-blue drapery came to suggest a very delicate emphasis to the rich and subdued surroundings.

In the first fresh days how mysterious these covered streets appear, these indoor thoroughfares, muffled with tan, where towering camels and shuffling donkeys and curvetting horses seem so astonishingly out of place.

Anglo-Egyptians who have to live in Cairo smile at my enthusiasm, and tell me they get tired of all this in time, and they are certainly helping to attenuate the charm. A late high official, on leaving Egypt, in his farewell speech told his audience that that day had been the happiest in his life, for he had seen the first “sandwich man” in the streets of Cairo. Since then another charming form of advertisement from the go-ahead West has appeared over the minarets of the alcohol-abhorring Moslems—a “sky sign” flashing out against the stars the excellence of somebody’s whisky. Can they now say “the changeless East”? And what a whirlpool of intensely Western amusements you may be sucked into if you are not wary. You may hide in the bazaars but you cannot live there, and teas, gymkanas, dances, and dinners will claim you for their own as though you were at Monte Carlo or still nearer home. In fact I have found New Cairo a little London and Monte Carlo rolled into one.



THE CAMEL CORPS

One glimpse of the vanishing Past which I got on a certain Friday at Cairo has left a queer impression on my mind, not at all a happy one. I am told the howling and dancing Dervishes have been lately suppressed, and I am dubious as to the fitness of us Christians being witnesses of those performances. However, I went, and saw what one can no longer see in Cairo. I found it difficult to believe those men were in real earnest, otherwise I should have felt more painfully impressed, but even as it was it was a disagreeable sight to witness the frenzied creatures flinging themselves backwards and forwards in time with the ever-increasing rapidity of the tom-toms till their long hair swept the floor at one moment and flew up straight on end towards the great vaulted interior of the mosque the next. Gasping shouts as of dying men escaped them rhythmically, and when the bewildering music had reached its climax it stopped, and so did they, and the priest, with gestures of loving commiseration and encouragement, very gracefully fell on their necks and gave them a drink of water each in turn. All this went on in a faint light from the hanging lamps, and the heat became suffocating. Mrs. C. put her hand on my shoulder, and pointing upwards asked me, “What is that?” A little white figure had appeared on a ledge high up under the drum of the dome. Whether man, woman, monkey, or goblin, I never saw a more impish figure, and it squatted there looking down from under its hood. I saw many very queer beings in Egypt as time went on, and decidedly the British occupation has not exorcised all the old magic of the Egyptians. But I have never played with it as some do. Not from fear, but from dislike. I am told in sober truth, people who came to scoff have begged to be let go when spell-bound with horror at what they have seen in a drop of enchanted ink spilled on a table.

We have sometimes played tricks on those people with imitation magic, but never more successfully than did

our friend Sir James Dormer out in the Great Desert, when he struck the Bedouins dumb by taking out his glass eye, which they, of course, believed to be his own, tossing it in the air, and replacing it. He had great power over them, I should say, for ever after. Brave man, he was killed shortly after in India by the wild animal he had wounded and who sprang on him on his blind side. I think a man with a single eye is doubly brave who goes out tiger-shooting in the jungle.

A much wholesomer diversion than the Dervishes was provided by the then General in command at Cairo a few days later, when some three hundred of the Native Camel Corps were put through a series of splendid manoeuvres out in the great open spaces of Abassieh, beyond the Tombs of the Mameluks. I got out of the carriage when warned that the final charge was about to be delivered, and stood so as to see them coming nearly "stem on." It was a sight worth seeing, and surprising to me, who, before I landed, had never seen a camel worthy of the name. When the "halt!" was sounded, down fell the three hundred bellowing creatures on their knees in mid-career, close up to us, and the panting riders leapt off, their accoutrements in most admired disorder, and their puttees for the most part streaming along the ground. I was in a hurry to get back to Shepheard's to take the impression down, for I was greatly struck by so novel a sight. The red morocco-leather saddle covers were most effective, and very sorry I was on my next visit to Egypt to find they had gone the way of all "effective" bits of military equipment, and were replaced by dull brown substitutes. Henceforth I was an enthusiastic admirer of that most picturesque of animals, and though I approached the camel at first with diffidence and apprehension, I soon found him much easier to draw than the horse. What you would *like* to do with a horse to give him movement and action, but *mustn't*, you *may* do with a camel. You can twist his neck almost indefinitely and brandish his great coarse head as you like, and his long legs give you *carte-blanche* for producing speed. I found out a curious fact as time went on and I had dogged dozens of camels about the desert and made orderlies walk them up and down for me—namely, that the camel moves his legs *in the walk* precisely like the horse, but when he falls into a trot he moves the legs of the same side forward together. He walks like a horse and trots like a camel! As to the gallop, a more dislocating performance I never saw. Lady — once told me she had, by an unlucky chance, got on a baggage camel with a hard mouth, or rather *nose*, and it ran away with her in the wide, wide desert. She hauled in the nose rope with the strength of despair, till the detestable animal's face was twisted back taut into her lap and was *looking at her*, and still the body galloped forward without the remotest check. She artistically left the end of the adventure untold.

As to the camel's noises, I don't think I ever got to the end of them. The snarl and the grunt I was prepared for—the horrible querulous and sickening sound that some one has likened to the roar of a lion and the grunt of a pig combined; but one day, as I was making a study of one of these ungracious creatures for a big picture, I thought I heard a sweet lark warbling somewhere, and I marvelled at its presence over the Egyptian desert. The warblings came from the camel's throat, and there was a look in his eye that seemed to warn me that he considered the sitting had lasted long enough. The length of his neck suggested that I was within measurable distance of a bite, and I dismissed my sitter and his lanky rider with promptitude.

Of all the figures that delighted me in Cairo those of the syces soon became first favourites. The dress, the springing run, the beauty of the movements—I don't think the human figure could be more charmingly shown off. The English General's syces alone wear the scarlet jacket, and deep indigo blue or maroon are the usual colours for the liveries of those mercuries. Our fast-trotting horses now try them too much, and we don't let them run very far, but take them up after a little while. They were intended to trot before the ambling horses or donkeys of Pashas, to clear the way with shouts and sticks through the crowded bazaars. I saw a lady (alas!) driving a very fast English horse past Shepheard's in a rakish T-cart, and the unfortunate syce was constantly on the point of being knocked down by the high-stepper. It did *not* add to the smartness of this turn-out to see this panting creature looking over his shoulder every minute in terror of the horse, and sometimes, when flagging in his run, being overtaken and having to run alongside. I levelled mental epithets at the thoughtless driver, and wondered how such a thing could be. Some of us are curiously inconsiderate. I am afraid she was but a type of many. Witness the suffering horses bitted up with tight bearing-reins standing for hours outside shops and smart houses where "at homes" are going on, when a word from the fair owners to their ignorant coachmen might procure ease for their miserable beasts. I am not enthusiastic about motors, but I am thankful for the fact that they are greatly reducing the sufferings of our poor "gees." I hope by and by the motor will be made noiseless and odourless, for at present I cannot enjoy its country driving. The scents of the country are replaced by smell and the sounds by noise.

You are better friends with the motor than I am, and have gathered much advantage from its audacity in taking you up, for instance, such rugged heights as those about Tivoli, well within a morning's outing from Rome, which I have looked at as inaccessible, and only to be admired from a lowly distance; those remote cones crowned with mediæval towns that figure in the backgrounds of many an "Adoration of the Magi" and "Flight into Egypt."

I am, like you, of two minds about very rapid travel. There is something to say for and against it. "For" it, the freshness with which the mind, untrammelled with the bodily weariness of "diligence" or "vetturino" jogging, receives impressions of points of interest; "against" it, the hustling of venerable monuments and revered natural features which should be approached with more ceremony. There is too much hustling nowadays. I don't know that I enjoyed my last visit to Venice quite as much as usual, feeling apologetic and guilty in participating in the "bumping" of the gondolas by the electric boats, whose back-wash sends them hopping and lurching in such an undignified manner. The sedate, gracious gondola, too well-bred ever to be in a hurry, "knocked out of time" by a fussing little electric launch, which is always in a hurry, with or without reason! What with the hurry, and the whistlings, and puffings, and syren-bellowsings, the powers that be are actually succeeding in making Venice noisy. But I have got off the Egyptian track a long way.

After a visit to Sakkara and to the Pyramids and the Sphinx I shall launch out upon Old Nile at once. Our Sakkara day was typical of many I was to experience in this strangest of lands—full of the delights, then new to me, of donkey-riding through the fresh winter air of the desert, but donkey-riding over tombs. Sakkara is the necropolis of Memphis, itself long buried, that capital of the Pyramid Period that looms dark far behind the nearer glories of Thebes and the Temples.

My hilarity induced by the sun, the breeze, the absurd goings-on of the donkeys of our party was constantly damped by the weird reminders we constantly came upon. Those Sakkara pyramids lack the majesty of *the* Pyramids, and one looks at the amorphous heaps in an oppressed silence. The Tomb of Ti raised one's spirits by its vivid frescoes showing the every-day life of that Prime Minister's *ménage*: it was cheery to see the poulterer in brilliant

colours bringing in the goose to the cook, but the final extinguisher fell when we were conducted along an avenue—a sandy causeway—lined on either side with I forget how many sarcophagi of sacred bulls. Each granite sarcophagus was, as far as my memory could say, of exactly the same dimensions and of almost the same shape as that of the great Napoleon at the “Invalides”! And all for bulls.

It was crushing; but well for me was the scamper back to the Cairo train. You cannot afford to be pensive riding a donkey at that pace with an Arab saddle to which you are not yet accustomed.



THE ENGLISH GENERAL'S SYCES

I am not going to dare to try to say anything new about the Pyramids of Gizeh or the Sphinx; nothing new in any shape can come in contact with these monuments. One feels overcome with hoariness oneself by their mere proximity and silenced by the weight of ages. I am not going to ask you to follow me into any interiors, for I did not go in myself; and indeed, in my progress through this land of tombs, I protested more or less successfully against burrowing into sepulchres, shuffling in thick gloom through pungent and uncanny mummy dust, in bat-scented atmosphere, while above-ground the blessed light of that matchless sky and the uplifting air of the desert were being wasted. Polite compulsion on certain social and festive (!) excursions alone forced me to forego for a while the joy of that “to-day” above-ground for the mould of the dead Aeons below.

I refer to a letter for my first visit to the Pyramids. That first sight of anything one has read of and pictured in one's child's mind in the course of education is a most precious occurrence, to be chronicled and set down at the moment.

30th November '85.—“A sweet gentle morning; limpid air, lovely fresh clouds in a soft blue sky. We started at 11 in a carriage, with our dragoman, and were soon taken at the usual hand gallop over the big iron bridge with the colossal green lions at each end which spans the wide Nile, into the acacia-shaded road which runs for a long distance in an imposing straight line to almost the very base of the great Pyramid. As we sped towards the illustrious group which we saw rising grey and stern at the very edge of the desert where it meets the bright green of the cultivated land we alternately looked ahead at what was awaiting us and at the ever-interesting groups of men, women, children, and animals which we passed, and at the mud villages with their palms and rude domes and minarets which lay in the well-watered, low-lying land on either side of the road. From the first moment I saw the Pyramids afar off I knew I was not destined to be disappointed, and my apprehensions caused by some travellers' descriptions vanished at the outset. It is difficult to put my feelings into words as I came nearer and nearer to these wonders of man's work, so pathetic in their antiquity and in the evidence they give of their builders' colossal failure to ensure for their poor bodies absolute safety during the long waiting for the Resurrection. The seals are broken, the secret places found out, the contents gone to the winds!

“My beloved father was constantly in my mind to-day, for he it was who with such patience taught us the value and fascinating interest of old Egyptian history, and here were some of the scenes he used to read to us of so often, but which he himself was not allowed to see. “Mrs. C— and I, on getting out of the carriage, first made the circuit of the Great Pyramid—a space of ‘thirteen statute acres,’ I remember Menzies telling us. I found that the most striking point from which to feel the immensity of the Pyramids is in the centre of the base, not the angles.

“We hear of ‘weeping stone.’ Here is stone that has wept blood and tears! Each succeeding year of the king's reign forced an additional coating to his tomb, and prolonged the slave-toil under the lash—all to safeguard a little dust that has now vanished. This age of ours is about the time the old Egyptians looked to for the Great Awakening, for which all their poor mummies were embalmed.

“How intolerable these three Pyramids must have looked when new and entirely coated with white marble. Their glitter under the blinding sunlight and the hardness of their repellent shapes make me shudder as I realise the effect. Seen in the rough, as they now are, they do not jar, but only oppress the mind by their ponderous immensity, and the eye takes great pleasure in their tawny colouring.

“We next went down to the Sphinx and rested a long while in its broad shadow. The gaze of the eyes is exceedingly impressive, and though the face is so mutilated one would not have it restored. Strange that one should prefer the broken nose and the hare-lip! It would not be *the* Sphinx if it had the universal Sphinx face as originally

carved. Originally! When? It was there long before the Pyramids, and it now appears that more than the 'forty centuries' looked down upon Napoleon's army from their summits. Sixty centuries, some say now. Time is annihilated as one stands confronted with the Sphinx, and a feeling of annihilation swirls around one's own microscopic personality.

"This annihilation of Time is one of the sensations of Egypt. Look at Rameses the Great in his glass coffin in the Cairo Museum. There, more than ever, the intervening cycles are as though they had never been as one stands face to face with Sesostris. More appalling than the Sphinx—a chimera in stone—here is the Man. Not his effigy, not his mask taken after death, but the *Man!* There is his hair, rusted by the Ages, his teeth still in their sockets, the gash across his forehead cleft in battle. His father lies in the next glass case, his grandfather on the other side, and many other Pharaohs similarly enclosed in glass and docketed lie around, all torn out of their hiding-places, stripped of their multitudinous envelopes, and exposed to the stare of the passers-by. Their mortuary jewels are ticketed in other glass cases, and only a few shreds of winding-sheet adhere to their bodies. They were religiously preserved, at infinite pains, for this.

"From the entrance to the Great Pyramid in the north face I had an enchanting view of Cairo on the right, in sun and shadow with a sky of most beautiful cloud-forms, and on the left the lovely pearly and rosy desert stretching away into the golden West. How cheerily, how consolingly the wholesome, refreshing Present receives us back after those wanderings down the corridors of the dead Ages! Let us wash our faces and smile again and feel young. The drive back was exhilarating and full of living interest. We overtook shepherds guiding their flocks along the road and carrying tired lambs on their shoulders. There were buffaloes and oxen and ploughmen going home from work in the tender after-glow, and then as soon as we were over the big iron bridge and in the suburbs again it was dark, and the gas lamps were being lighted, and 'Tommy Atkins' was about, and British officers were riding in from polo, and the *cafés* of this Parisianized quarter were full and noisy, and I felt I had leapt back into To-day by crossing an iron bridge that spanned six thousand years. My thoughts lingered long amongst the most ancient, most pathetic, most solemn monuments of the pre-Christian world."



CHAPTER II

THE UPPER NILE

AND now for Luxor. Of all the modes of travel there is none, to my mind, so enjoyable as that by water—fresh water, be it understood—and if you can do this in a house-boat with your home comforts about you, what more can you desire? We had the "Post Boat" to Luxor, and the sailing dahabieh after that. Travelling thus on the Nile you see the life of the people on the banks, you look into their villages, yet a few yards of water afford you complete immunity from that nearer contact which travel by road necessitates; and in the East, as you know, this is just as well. Not that I really allow the drawbacks of the East to interfere with my own enjoyment, but the isolation of the boat is best, especially with little children on board.

I had read many books of travel on the Nile and knew what to look for. Is there not a charm in knowing that some city, some temple, some natural feature you have tried to realize in your mind is about to appear in very truth just round that bend of road or river? You are going to see in a few minutes that historic thing itself, not its counterfeit in a book, but *it*. And so, as we neared Luxor towards evening, I looked out for Karnac on the left, and lo! the first pylon glided by. My first pylon! How many like it I was to see before I had done with Old Nile. They are not beautiful in shape, nor can any Egyptian architecture, as far as form goes, be called beautiful; the shapes are barbaric—I had almost said brutal—stupidly powerful and impressive by mere bulk. The beauty lies in the colouring.

What a feast these ruins afford to the eye by their colour, what a revel of blues, greens, and low-toned reds in their unfaded paintings! Taken as bits of colour only, without dwelling too much on the forms, all in such light, the shadows filled with golden reflections—taken thus, or deeply tinged with the lustrous after-glow, or the golden moonlight, they are all-satisfying.



REGISTERING FELLAHEEN FOR THE CONSCRIPTION

I will not, however, burden you with these ponderous pylons and mammoth monoliths; they can only be enjoyed *in situ*, illuminated and glorified by the climate of their homes. Indeed, I felt often very oppressed and tired by them, but never did I weary of the landscape, the people, the animals, the river.

One very saddening glimpse of fellah life was afforded Mrs. C— and myself at Luxor by the English Consul (a negro), who arranged that we should see the registering of the young fellahen for the conscription. I think the British have changed all this lately, so we were lucky in seeing a bit of the vanishing Past—a remnant of the Oriental Past which no one can regret. We worked our way, led by the Consul, through the Arab crowd in the village till we came to the entrance of the courtyard where the drama was about to open. At the gate was a scuffling mass of indescribably hideous old hags—the mothers and aunts and grannies of the young fellahs inside, wailing and jerking out their lamentations with marionette-like action of their shrivelled arms. As though by one accord they would stop dead for a minute and look at each other, and then all together begin again the skeleton chorus, throwing dust on their heads. The unsavoury group came in with us pell-mell when the gate was opened, and we found ourselves hoisted rather than conducted to a divan prepared for us under a shed, from whence we could see all that passed.



"NO MOORING TO-NIGHT!"

Three Circassian inspectors, looking horrid in European clothes, were at the head of a long rickety table, covered with a white cloth, in front of us. This white cloth, in combination with the surging groups, made a wonderfully good blank space in the composition of what I thought would make a striking picture. The sketch I insert here is in no particular arranged by me, but everything is exactly as I saw it. I noted everything down in my sketch-book on the spot. The sheiks, stately men in silken robes, who had brought each his quota of recruits from his district, sat chatting over their coffee at the farther end of the table, and the doctor at once set to to examine the miserable youths that came up for registration. Fathers pleaded exemption for their sons on one pretext or another, such as leprous heads, blindness, weak chests, and so forth; the mothers, aunts, and grannies aforesaid went on jibbering and clacking their jaws in the background, no one paying the least attention to them. If a fellah was passed by the doctor a gendarme gripped him and pummelled him all the way to the standard, where he was measured. If satisfactory, the woe-begone creature received a sounding box on the ear, just in fun, from the gendarme, and was shoved into the pen where the successful (!) candidates were interned; if he was below the mark, all the same he got his blow, and was pushed and cuffed back to his friends and relatives. One mother had crept forward while her son was having his lanky leg straightened by the doctor, the father pleading the boy's lameness (Erckmann-Chatrion's *Conscript* orientalised!); a gendarme sprang forward and knocked her down, then hauled her off by her arms, which were so very thin and suggestive of a mummy that I could not look any longer; he was so rough I really thought he would pull them out of their sockets. My friend was crying, and if I had not been so concentrated on my pencil notes I should have cried too. "Surely," she said, "that can't be his mother, she looks a hundred at least." "A hundred!" I exclaimed, "she is four thousand years old—a mummy!" I felt very sick as well as sorry. We were politely offered coffee in jewelled cups, which we could not taste, and surreptitiously emptied behind the divan.

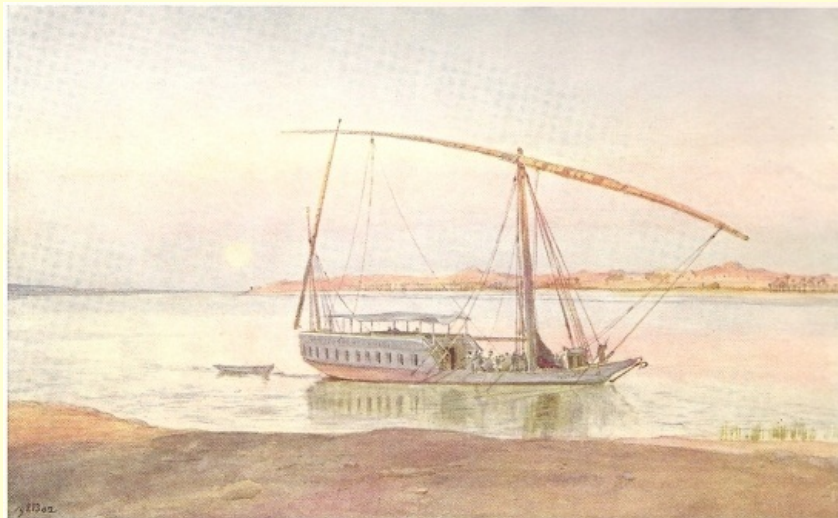
The English have worked wonders since those days with the Egyptian army. Taking the young men in the right way our officers have turned them into remarkably smart-looking soldiers, and their terror of the service, I am told, has vanished.

This was altogether a day which showed us the seamy side of Egyptian life, for in the evening we and all the guests of the hotel went to see the dancing at the *café*, a sort of mud cave full of wood smoke. It was all very ugly and repulsive, and the music was impish and quite in keeping. I was glad to have this experience, but once is enough. Talking of music, I don't know anything more appealing in its local sentiment than the song of our crew when they were hauling and poling on calm nights later on. Strange, unaccustomed intervals, and the key always in the minor. In the pauses we heard the beetles and crickets on the banks chiming in in a cheerful major.

Our sojourn at Luxor was a time of deep enjoyment, for we made almost daily excursions on both banks of the Nile, excursions beginning in the very early mornings, at sunrise, and ending in gallops home on our donkeys in the after-glow, or trips on board the ferry-boat, from Thebes, in a crowd of splendid Arabs, whose heads, figures, and blue and white robes, or brown striped camel's hair burnouses, added greatly to the charm of the landscape. It was a joy merely to breathe that desert air. All that was wholesome and not too tiring, nor risky from the sun, was enjoyed by the children with us, but I kept them chiefly in the paradisaical hotel garden as the safest place. One had to be very careful. I cannot say that "black care" did not sometimes ride on my donkey's crupper, for I knew W. was pressing the enemy harder every day, and that a battle was imminent. At last the great telegram came. Ginniss was fought and won, and all the enemy's guns and standards taken. He sent me the message from the field. We might now come up. It took a day or two to get the "*Fostât*" ready—the dahabieh which he had sent down for us. Some wounded officers from the front brought news of the battle, and, strange to relate, the only officer killed at Ginniss was son of one of Mrs. C.'s oldest friends! What strange things happen in life. I had met young Soltau the year before at her house on Dartmoor, and she and I were destined to hear together of his death in battle on the Upper Nile.

We set sail in the first week of '86 for Assouan, where W. was to meet us, and I witnessed the daily development of the Nile's beauties with the deepest pleasure, and a mind no longer over-shadowed.

I wonder how many people who have been to Egypt recognise the fact that all its beauty is reflected? It is either the sun or the moon or the stars that make Egypt glorious. Under thick cloudy skies it would be nothing. But the co-operation of the illuminated objects is admirable, and the two powers combined produce the Egypt we admire. W. and I came to the same conclusion, that much of the glory of the moonlights is owing to the response of the desert, especially the golden desert of Nubia.



THE "FOSTÂT" BECALMED

But I have also seen, on rare occasions, delicate effects of veiled sunshine on river, palms, and desert too exquisite in refinement to be easily described. I remember one memorable grey day which we spent in turning the loveliest river reach of the whole series below Assouan, the wind having completely dropped—a day which dwells in

my memory as a precious passage of silvery colour amidst all the gold. The palm-tree stems towards sundown were illuminated with rosy light against the pallid background of sand-hills facing the West, and of the delicate pearl-grey sky. The greens were cool and vivid, the water like a liquid opal. I wrote a whole letter to Mamma on that one grey day on the Nile. But even that evening the after-glow made itself felt through the clouds, lighting them from behind in an extraordinary manner, so that the filmy screen appeared red-hot. The beautiful cloud-veil could not shut out so fervid a rush of colour.

When a strong wind blows the desert sand into the air, obscuring the sun and thickening the sky, what a change comes over the scene! Egypt is then undoubtedly ugly, and all charm flies away on the wings of the blast.

But the blast speeds the dahabieh on its way, and pleasant it was sitting of an evening in the cosy saloon to see the hanging lamp swinging with the motion of the bounding "*Fostât*," and to hear the creaking of the timbers, for the distance from Assouan, where W. was to meet us, was being sensibly diminished. On some other evenings the fair north wind was just enough to quicken the pace without dulling the brilliant light of the moon, and there was to be no tying up under the mud bank those nights. Then again a dead calm might come down upon us, and after poling, tracking, or hauling up to the kedge anchor all day to their monotonous sing-song, the crew would have orders to moor for the night. I would then venture a run along the shore with the children, and have a scamper among the palms and cotton plants, which were waving and rustling mysteriously to imperceptible sighings of the air at the water's edge. One or two armed men, of course, landed also.

At Esneh I had the honour of entertaining the Pasha of that wonderful place, whose temple I had particularly wished to see. He received us with much ceremony, and we all went on shore escorted by his guard in great state, walking through the bazaars accompanied by the wild and ragged population. But for the soldiers and their whips we could not have moved a yard. We visited the wonderful temple, the first we had seen with the ceiling intact, which the colossal pillars were made to support. I prefer the ruins so open to the sky that the sun may be seen amongst them. Here, owing to the unbroken ceiling, all was gloom. At Edfoo I was to see a *whole* temple with pylons and all, almost in perfect preservation, and to know the Egyptian temple in its entirety.

How funny our party looked—two English ladies, two little children, and English maid, guarded by bashi-bazouks, slowly progressing through a crowd of indescribable dirt and wildness. We looked into an oil mill where the press was exactly like the wine-presses in Tuscany. You remember the one I sketched at Signa, the picturesque *Strettojo* of the vintage? We poked our noses into the cavernous recesses where gigantic negroes were dyeing the native cloth a splendid indigo, their black arms blue to the shoulder. Oh, what colour!

On going back to the dahabieh we all, except myself, had our fortunes told in a narrow lane where a row of Soudanese fortune-tellers were squatting with patches of smooth sand before them on which they made the person interested impress his or her hand. Upon the impression they made many signs and marks. Everything was quite satisfactory. The children were to have "pleasant paths in life and *strong loins*." The maid was to marry a white man, which was a comfort.

In the evening the Pasha dined on board. He spoke in French, and nothing could surpass the florid eulogies he bestowed on "his brother, that lion," my husband. I saw him depart on his sleek and fat white ass, which stood quite fourteen hands, and was equipped in Arab trappings of indigo and dead gold. In the morning I received the Pasha's presents of fruit, vegetables, eggs in hundreds, two live turkeys, and a black lamb. A gorgeous cavass in sky blue and carrying a wand of office was installed on board for the rest of the voyage to Assouan. There had been feasting and much thumping of tom-toms and whinings of curious fiddles on deck during dinner the night before, where the crew were entertaining the Pasha's body-guard. My dragoman's bill next day included these items: "Trinks and trymbals for the crew"; "hay for the limp." The poor black "limp" with his hay was put into the little boat in tow, and I had to deliver him up, as a matter of course, to the crew a few days later. Then came Edfoo, whose temple is one of the most conspicuous in Egypt. I had been on the look-out for its mighty pylons with especial eagerness, and I was glad that we had time to spend two hours on land while some repairs were being done on the "*Fostât*." The Esneh cavass was useful as well as extremely ornamental, as he kept off the wild crowd in the village by magical waves of his wand of office, and an occasional thump on a screaming villager.



AT PHILÆ

The guard turned out and saluted our party, and altogether things went very well, and I enjoyed my long-looked-forward-to Edfoo.

Then on board again, with a steady north breeze which, if it had filled our eyes with sand at Edfoo, was making up for the discomfort by carrying us in spanking style towards Assouan and the meeting.

After one of our fair-wind nights, when the "*Fostât*" was bowling along over the lumpy water, I asked the reis if we had come to Comombos. He made vigorous signs showing we had passed it in the night. "Silsileh?"; again the welcome backward wave of his arm. That, too, was long passed. We were getting very near. I noticed the people on the banks were becoming blacker and there were fewer of them; the mountains had vanished and were replaced by lion-coloured sand-hills, typically African. The black rocks looked like sleeping crocodiles.

A faint whisp of smoke presently rose beyond a bend of the river, far ahead. "What is that?" I asked the dragoman. "English steamer." Great excitement. The little armed steamer puffs into sight; some one is waving a red handkerchief from the turret! "Furl the "*Fostât's*" mainsail!" The crew swarm up the spar. *Ding, ding* goes the electric bell on the gunboat. The meeting is an accomplished fact—we from Plymouth, he from Wady Halfa. We are soon at Assouan, and while the "*Fostât*" is being hauled by great gangs of negroes through the cataract, we are guests of the General in that command on board his charming dahabieh moored under Philæ. There the solemn rocks echo the waltzes of the military band and the talk and laughter of our *réunions* on board the "*Pharaon*."

If the Egyptian desert answered back in harmonious tones the light of the sun and moon, what a *crescendo* of glowing response came from the Nubian sands! Immediately we crossed the frontier my eyes were surprised by the golden tone the desert had assumed, and the polished rocks that studded it had suddenly put on the richest colours granite holds—deep red and purple, and the black of basalt. It was a new scheme of colouring. The sunset and the after-glow were still more astonishing than those of Egypt, the colour of the shadows on the golden sands at sundown more positive in their limpid colours. One felt looking at the stars and planets as though one had been lifted to a world nearer to them than before, so large and clear had they grown even from the extraordinary clearness they had at Luxor. Oh! land of enchantment, is it any wonder the Nile is so passionately loved, especially by the artist, to whom the joy of the eye is supreme? As to worthily painting the Egyptian landscape, I cannot think any one will ever do it—the light is its charm, and this light is unattainable. There is one thing very certain, oil paints are hopelessly "out of it," and in water-colours alone can one hope to suggest that light. I soon gave up oils in Egypt, not only on account of their heaviness, but the miseries I endured from flies and sand were heart-breaking; your skies are seamed with the last wanderings and struggles of moribund flies, and coated with whiffs of sand suddenly flung on them by a desert gust! I was particularly anxious to get a *souvenir* of the doorway in the court of the temple on Philæ Island, where Napoleon's soldiers engraved their high-sounding "*Une page d'histoire ne doit pas*," etc. Unfortunately, on the day I chose, we had a high wind, a very exasperating ordeal, and my attempt at oil-sketching this subject was a fiasco. After persevering with one half-blinded eye open at a time and with sand thickly mixed with my paints, I saw the panel I had been desperately holding on the easel hurled to the ground on its buttered side as for a moment I turned to answer a remark of Mrs. C.'s. She said I bore it angelically. As since those days lovely Philæ Island is being submerged and the temple melting away, the poor little panel has become more historically valuable than I thought it ever would do at the time, and I insert its replica in water-colours *minus* the smudges.

Many pleasant hours we spent at Philæ, which, I suppose, is the culminating point of the Nile's beauties and marvels. One day, while W. was gone to Assouan for provisions, I went over with Mrs. C. to the opposite bank of the river by boat, an imp of a small boy taking upon himself to escort us. He divested himself of his one garment, which he carried in a bundle on his head, and swam alongside our "felucca." Our approach had been observed from a wild mud hamlet up on the fantastic rocks, and a bevy of black and brown women came hopping and skipping down to us.

Little shrivelled old hags and wild little young women with nose rings and anklets, their hair plaited in hundreds of little tails reeking with castor oil, each little tail ending in a lump of mud.



A "LAMENT" IN THE DESERT

Mrs. C. asked them to unfasten and display their locks, and in return let down her own six-foot-long auburn tresses and stood on them to "astonish the natives." They danced and wailed in slow cadence, softly clapping their hands and wagging their heads in admiration as they made the round of the tall, rosy Englishwoman. There she stood, on her hair, that trailed on the sand, in a golden halo of sunshine, the grim hypæthral temple and the huge rocks as background, and surrounded by little skinny, skipping, half-naked, barbarian women and quite-naked little children. They turned to me and made signs that I should also let my hair down. Because I excused myself, the little boy imp, still with his garment on his head, came forward and took upon himself condescendingly to explain to the little women, shouting "*Mafeesh, mafeesh!*" ("Nothing, nothing!") and dismissing me with a wave of his arm.

From Philæ we soon glided into the Tropics. I say in a letter: "The moonlight in Nubia also surpasses that of Egypt, and I see in it a light I never saw before I came to this wonderful land. It is difficult to describe this light. It is brilliant yet soft; light in darkness; not like the day; not like the dawn: the sky at full moon is so bright that only the larger stars are seen; and the yellow sand, the ashen bloom on the tops of the sand-hills, the various tones of green in palm-tree, tamarisk, and mimosa keep distinctly their local tints, yet softened and darkened and changed into a mysterious vision of colour too subtle for words of mine. Every night Venus and other great planets and stars shed reflections in the still water like little moons in every part of the Great Stream wherever one turns."

W. could not spare the time for lotus-eating under sail, so a "stern-wheeler" towed us from Philæ to Wady Halfa. It took very little away from the romance, and the steady progress was very grateful. On that glassy river, as it was now, we would have been an age getting to our goal.

I was greatly struck with Korosko, a place which, besides its natural desolate and most strange appearance, was sad with memories of Gordon. This was his starting-point as he left the Nile to travel across the desert to Khartoum, never to return. From a height one can see the black and grey burnt-up landscape which lonely Gordon traversed. It is a most repellent tract of desert just there, calcined and blasted. A view I had of the Nile, southward, from the mountains of Thebes one day, though bathed in sunshine, has remained most melancholy in my mind, because, looking towards Khartoum, I thought of the hundreds of my countrymen who lay buried in already obliterated graves all along those lonely banks, away, away to the remote horizon and beyond, sacrificed to the achievement of a great disaster. Others like them have arisen since and will arise, eager to offer their lives for success or failure, honours or a nameless grave.

One evening, as the "*Fostât*," in tow, was skimming through the calm water with a rippling sound, and we were all sitting on deck, W. described to us so vividly a memorable night before the fight that put a stop to hostilities, that I could see the whole scene as though I had been there. They were out in the desert, the moon was full; the Dervishes were "sniping" at long range, when afar off was heard a Highland "lament." The "sniping" ceased all along the enemy's line and dead silence fell upon the night but for the wail of the bagpipes. The Dervishes seemed to be listening. The "lament" increased in sound, and presently the Cameron Highlanders approached, bearing, under the Union Jack, the body of an officer who had died that day of fever, to add yet another grave to the number that lay at intervals along the shores of the great river. You should hear the pipes in the desert, as well as on the mountain-side, to understand them.

"Every phase of the day and night" (letter, 12th January '86), "appeals to me on the Nile, not forgetting those few moments that follow the after-glow which are like the last sigh of the dying day. The delicacy of those pure tints is such that one scarcely dares to handle them in writing. Evening after evening I have watched by the desert death-

bed of the day, looking eastward so as to have the light upon the hills.

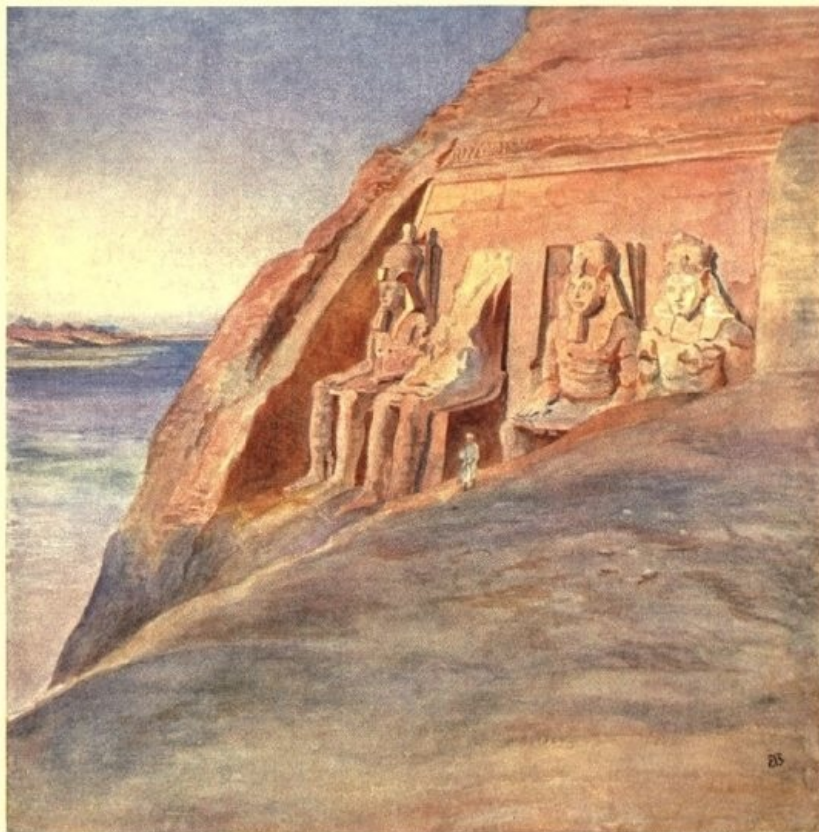
"Those tender, sad, pathetic hills, and beyond them the mournful mountains, possessing nothing,—not a blade of grass, not a lichen, not a herb; they are absolute paupers amongst mountains, and they might be in the moon, these derelicts, so bereft are they of all things.

"And yet the light, the atmosphere, give them a consoling beauty. What a poem might be written to them as they look thus for a minute or two before the dark-blue pall of night sinks down!"

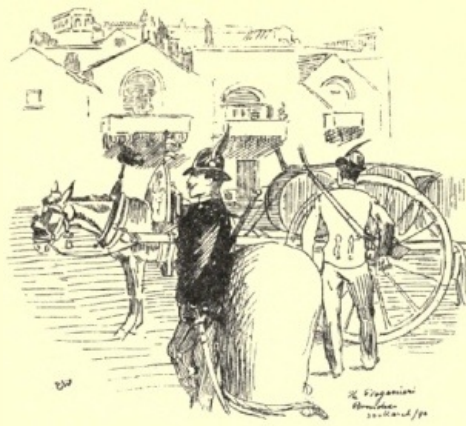
Wady Sabooah, the "Valley of Lions," was one of the most striking things I had seen on this exquisite section of our river voyage. The abrupt sand-hills held shadows of the most delicate amethyst at noonday which, combined with the gold of the sunlit parts, produced a delicacy of vibrating tones which enchanted the eye but saddened the artist's mind, recognising as it did the futility of trying to record such things in paint! But I shall weary you with all this daily rapture, and I will bid good-bye in these pages to the desert, well named by the Moslems "The Garden of Allah." There is no pollution there, and He may walk in His garden unoffended.

In the first really hot days of March I and the children came home—Wady Halfa was becoming no place for us, and W. remained with his Brigade through the weary days of summer, unknown in their exhausted and horrible listlessness to me who will always think of the Nile as an earthly paradise. One halt I must make on our way down, at Abu Simbel, that mysterious rock temple I had longed to see in the first ray of sunrise, for it faces due east. W., who accompanied us as far as Assouan, gave orders that our stern-wheeler (the old "*Fostât*" had been dismissed) should tie up overnight at the temple, and before daylight I was up and ready. I had packed my water-colours and had only a huge canvas and oil-paints available. With these I climbed the hill and waited for the first ray in the wild wind of dawn.

The event was all I hoped for as regards the effect of those "scarlet shafts" on the four great figures (how many sunrises had they already awakened to?) "A great cameo," Miss Amelia Edwards calls that façade at sunrise in her fascinating book, and that phrase had made me long for years for this moment. But alas! my canvas acted as a sail before the wind and nearly carried me into the river, the sand powdered the wet paint more viciously than ever, and I returned very blue to breakfast. Still, I had got my "Abu Simbel at Sunrise," and I insert a water-colour taken in comfort from the hard-earned but scarcely presentable original.



ABU SIMBEL AT SUNRISE



CHAPTER III

ALEXANDRIA

OUR subsequent experiences of Egypt at Alexandria from '90 to '93 made me acquainted with the Delta and that "Lower Nile" which has a very particular charm of its own, and possesses the precious advantage of being out of the tourist track altogether.

Not the least amongst the attractions of an Egyptian command (to Madame!) is the yearly autumn journey to that country through Italy, with Venice as an embarkation point. Madame knows nothing of the horrors of the summer months endured by the "man on duty" out there, and serenely enjoys "the best," without the seamy side ever turning up. She thinks that to spend one's winters on the Nile, and one's summers in the "Emerald Isle," is as near an ideal existence as this world allows us. It is good to be a woman!

That farewell scene at Venice on board the P. & O., when friends came to see us off with bouquets and "bon voyage"—how I should like just one more of those gay leave-takings! I see again the dancing gondolas on the sparkling ripples as they wait round the ship; the hat and handkerchief wavings ashore and afloat, and Venice encircling the sprightly little drama with her gracious arms.

Who that has plied between Italy and Egypt does not know the poetry of that first night at sea, when the cloud-like mountains behind the vanished Venice have also faded away, and there is nothing for it now but to turn to the darkling Adriatic, heaving dimly beyond the ship's bows, and commit oneself to the mercies of the deep. "And the dinner-bell," some one is sure to add. Never shall it be said of me that I chronicle the meals of my little travels.

The next morning the cessation of vibrations and throbbings wakes you. Behold through the port-hole Ancona's white church high up overhead, shining in the level sunbeams of the young day.

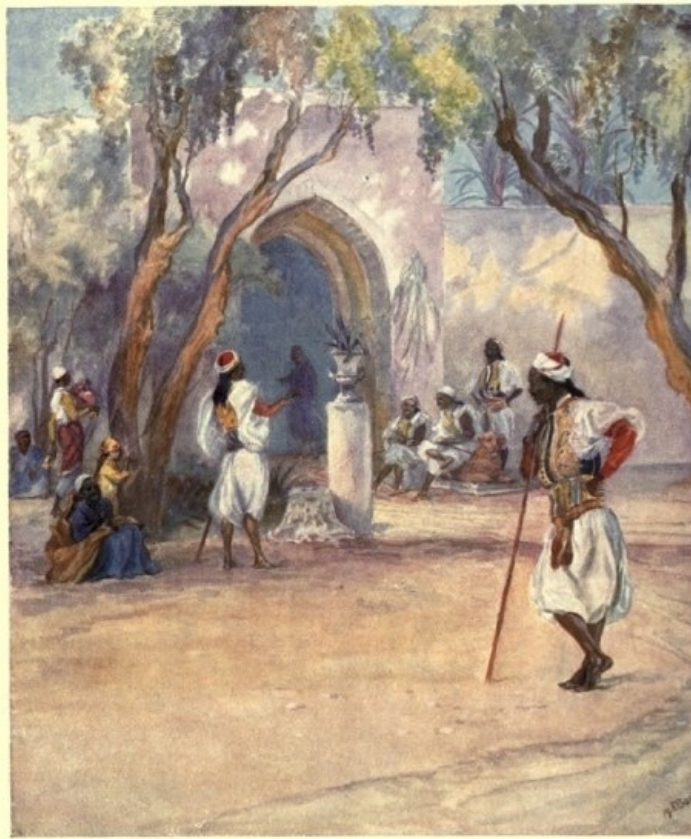
The morning after that it is Brindisi, where they wait for the "long sea" passengers and the mails, and the Italian chatter and laughter along the quays never stops. Here, in the course of a stroll, you may pat the two pillars that form the winning-post of that Appian Way whose starting-post you know in Rome.

There is very little monotony in a voyage of this kind, for you are never for long out of sight of land. The Albanian coast, the Ionian Islands, Crete, "Morea's Hills"—what a series of lovely things to beguile the six days' passage! Yet, all the same, one has a thrill of delight one day when an unusual stir amongst the crew begins, and the hatches over the heavy baggage-hold are opened, and the lifting gear is got into position. "We shall be in at daybreak." Bless the captain for those words! And the "man on duty" aforesaid will be standing on the landing-stage.

W. arranged a good studio for me at our new post, but I had distractions. British and Foreign naval squadrons occasionally bore down on us with thundering salutes, and had to be attended to; distinguished and even august personages paused at Alexandria on their way "up"; picnics on horse-back, donkey-back, camel-back, by road, rail, and river, to Aboukir, Aboo-sir, and sundry oases all claimed my delighted co-operation, plus my unsociable sketch-book.

Ah, the good good time, the golden Egyptian days!

But I found nothing so interesting as a holiday we managed to squeeze in and spend on board a little dahabieh for two, on a nine days' cruise to Rosetta and back. I then knew the Western Delta and, superficially, the life of its neglected and forgotten people. I am much afraid that since the Assouan Dam and its doings, their meagre water-supply is anything but increased, and I pray that the English authorities may remember those poor people at last. They are like fish in a pond that is slowly drying up.



MADAME'S "AT HOME" DAY; SERVANTS AT THE GATE

On board the little "*Rose*," lent us by an Armenian Bey, I tasted once more the placid pleasure of fresh water travel under sail and oar; and I again heard the strange intervals of the songs that kept the oarsmen in time at their work. But I also learnt what Egyptian rain was like, and how hideous the Mahmoudieh becomes under weeping skies. I saw in this land the deepest and ugliest mud in the world—mud of the colour of chocolate. The weather cleared usually towards evening, and nothing more weird have I ever seen than the villages, cemeteries, solitary tombs, goats, buffaloes, and wild human beings that loomed upon the sky-line on the top of the banks against the windy clouds, reddened by the fiery globe that had sunk below the palm-fringed horizon. These canal banks might give many people the horrors, and I certainly thought them in that weather the uncanniest bits of manipulated nature I had ever seen.

At Atfeh, after three days' canal, we emerged upon the wide and glorious Nile, and the skies smiled upon us once more. But the sadness of the country remained to us as we contemplated the miserable villages which occurred so frequently, with their poor graveyards at their sides, the latter only distinguishable by the smaller size of the dwellings, and the fact that the huts of the living had doors, and the huts of the dead had none—that was all.

Once on the swift Nile current, with the eight sweeps flashing and splashing to the rhythm of the strange singing (the prevailing north wind being against sailing), we made a good run down to Rosetta, on whose mud bank we thumped in a surprising manner, at 10 P.M. by a pale watery moonlight.

Never have I seen anything sadder than the land we passed through that day—dead, neglected, forlorn. Every now and then what seemed a great city loomed mistily ahead of us, with domes and minarets, and what seemed mighty palaces, piled one above the other on stately terraces. These apparitions were on the sites of once magnificent centres of wealth and luxury, and from afar they might still appear to be what once they were. Then, as we neared them, the domes unveiled themselves into heaps of filthy straw; the palaces were mud hovels a few feet high; the great mosques were merely poor half-ruined tombs into which a single person could scarcely crawl. The illusion occurred every time we came in sight of one of these phantasms, and the effect on the mind was most singular. City after city arose thus on one's sight in the distance, as though seen through the long ages that have rolled by since their prime, and those long ages seemed like a veil that rapidly dissolved to show us, as we approached, the wretched reality of to-day. "The pride of life," "pomp," "arrogance," "luxury,"—those epithets were their own once, while to-day the very antitheses of such terms would best become them. They are literally all dust now, and there survive only the poor blunt-shaped dwellings for living and dead, that lie huddled together in such pathetic companionship.

As the daylight fades we see the people creeping into their shelters like their animals, to wait, like them, in the unlighted darkness, for the coming of the morning. Their up-river fellow-workers live in a land where the hardships of this cold and muddy winter misery are unknown.

I was glad to see the Rosetta mouth of the Nile, thus completing rather an extended, as well as intimate, knowledge of the great river from there to Sarras in the Soudan. Return tickets to Khartoum had not yet taken travellers by rail up the Nile in so many dusty hours.

Still grey was the weather down to where the river merges into the melancholy sea, between Napoleon's two dismantled forts, and what beauty there might have been was densely veiled. The old French "Fort St. Julien" was interesting as being the place where the "Rosetta Stone," which gave the key to all the Egyptian hieroglyphics, was discovered. There we moored for the night on our return to Rosetta, in a Napoleonic atmosphere, and next day I sketched the once opulent commercial city, where now nothing seems doing. A bald old pelican caused some movement in the streets by raiding the odoriferous fish-market and scurrying down, chased by small boys, to the water's edge where I was sitting, in order to float, by copious draughts, the fish that lay in his pouch down his throat,

pill-wise. The pelican always got his pill down in time, and the race to the river was repeated more than once with the small boys. On another evening, on our return voyage, we moored under the wild town of Syndioor, whose minaret, the tallest, I should think, in the world, proved to be no phantom, but a lovely and solid reality. In the pearly light of the succeeding mornings the shining cities looked, through their misty veils, more lovely afar off than ever. Finally we dropped back again between the mud banks of the canal, and in due time landed under the oleanders of our starting-place, the crew kissing hands and paying us the prescribed compliments of farewell.

Our major-domo, Ruffo the European, was with us on board. I must tell you of Ruffo; such an honest man in a country of much corruption! He did all my housekeeping, and that zealously; but, desiring sometimes to consult me about dinner, his figurative way of putting things before me was a little trying. "Miladi, would you like cutlets?" patting his ribs; "or a leg?" advancing that limb; "or, for a very nice entrée, brains?" tapping his perspiring forehead. "Oh no, Ruffo, *never* brains, *please!*" He would rejoice in strokes of good luck in the market, and fly through the sitting-rooms to me, perhaps bearing, like a gonfalon, a piece of beef, where good beef was so rare; "Look, miladi, you will not often meet such beef walking in the street." He always smelled the melons on presenting them to me, to invite my attention to their ripeness.

After Cairo, Alexandria struck me very disagreeably at first; but when I got over its Western pseudo-Italian garishness, I was able to console myself with many a precious bit of orientalism, and even the bizarre mixture of flashy European tinsel with the true native metal amused me so much that I ended by enjoying the place and in being delighted to return there for yet another winter, and another. Nor can I ever forget that this appointment afforded us the most memorable journey of our lives—the ride through Palestine!

Not even the drive on the old Shoubra Road at Cairo surpassed the Alexandrian Rotten Row on the Mahmoudieh Canal on a Friday afternoon in its heterogeneous comicality. Every type was on the Mahmoudieh, in carriages, and on horseback—Levantine, Greek, Jew, Italian, Arab; up and down they rode on the bumpy promenade, under the shade of acacias and other flowering trees that skirted the picturesque canal. Across this narrow strip of water you saw the Arab villages of a totally different world; and I really felt a qualm every time I saw a *fellah* over the way turning his back to the western sun (and to us) to pray, in absolute oblivion of our silly goings-on. On our side was Worldiness running up and down, helter-skelter; on the other, the repose of Kismet.

Here comes a foreign consul—you know him by his armed, picturesque ruffian on the box—in a smart Victoria, driven by a coal-black Nubian in spotless white necktie and gloves; the Arab horse is ambling along with high measured action. Much admired is *Monsieur le Consul*—the observed of all observers; he looks as though he felt himself "quite, quite." But "Awah, awah!" Here come at a smart leaping run two shouting syces turbaned in the Alexandrian fashion; and behind them a barouche and pair driven by an English coachman of irreproachable deportment. What thrilling rivalry is here!

Exquisite horses with showy saddle-cloths there are, with *le sport* on their backs in the person of "young Egypt" in the inevitable *tarboosh*. That *tarboosh*! It is the "bowler" hat of the East, and I don't know which I hate most—it or the "bowler."

The ladies are overwhelming; and I rest my eyes occasionally by watching the demure feminine figures of the "East end" who are filling their *amphoræ* under the oleanders over the way, or washing their clothes and their babies in the drinking water supply of the native town.

Towards sunset there is a *saute qui peut* of equipages citywards, and I never heard such a din as is set up as soon as the soft roads are passed and the paved streets are reached. Over it all you may hear:—

The tow-row-row and the tow-row-row
Of the British Grenadiers.

The Suffolks or the Surreys are marching from Mandara Camp to the sound of that drum which we like to remind ourselves "beats round the world."

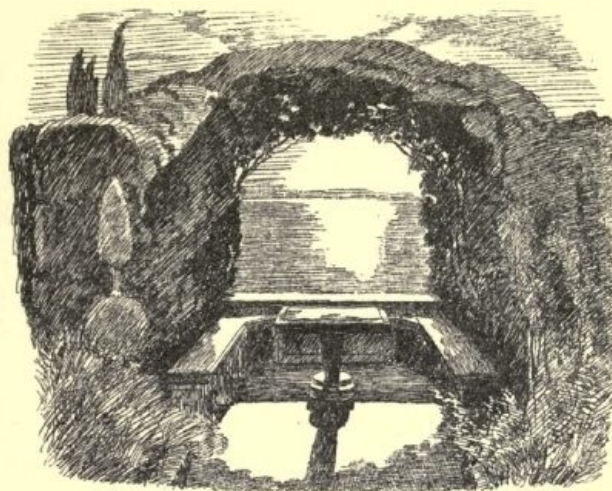




SYNDIOOR ON THE LOWER NILE

III

THE CAPE



CHAPTER I

TO THE CAPE

I DON'T know whether in the Atlantic that lies between England and America you have had calm moonlight nights such as, taking the ocean longitudinally, one may have an impressive experience of, if timing the voyage rightly. I don't suppose a more favourable time for "detachment" could be easily obtained than those night hours on board a great ship out at sea, when one more easily realizes than in the daytime how the huge "Liner" is but a pathetic little

speck on the landless and fathomless waters. The heart of this atom beats courageously enough night and day, without a rest, as it carries its charge onwards to deliver it at the goal that lies in the "Under World," but never does one more sensitively feel the power of those words, "In the hollow of His hand," than when realising the true proportion of the "vessel" that carries us and our fortunes.

We spent—the children, Mrs. B. (wife of W.'s Military Secretary), and I—a few hours by night at Madeira, three days out from England, the only land we touched throughout the six thousand miles.

My diary says, 21st February '99: "We spent a memorable night on an enchanted Island. Arriving at Funchal overnight instead of in the morning of the next day, as we were timed to do, we took the place by surprise. First we saw a blazing light on an advanced rock, which stood out very black, well ahead of the dusky mass of the Island, which rose high behind it, dimly crowned with spectral snow. The moon, not yet full, was clearing her way through thin cloud veils, and the town at first could be guessed at only by clusters of lights along the shore, where the waves were breaking with a strange clamour on the pebbles.

"Presently balls of fire were sent up on the slopes above the town to tell Funchal we were coming, and, as we slowly rounded into the smooth water of the bay, we could see a little armada of boats pushing out in a flurried line towards us, and we presently heard the Portuguese chatter of their occupants who were soon swarming up the side to try and get all the money out of us that they could in exchange for fruit, embroidery, basket-work, etc. Then a streaming triton appeared at the bulwarks, outside, his face and brawny muscles gleaming in our electric light against the deep-blue background of moonlit sea. The triton asked for sixpences to be thrown into the water, and he dived for them and came up, grinning and streaming, into the light again for more. All the world over, where the seas are clear, this game goes on to beguile the traveller. I must say I think those sixpences are fairly earned when I see to what depths these creatures dive for them in semi-darkness. To what metaphorical depths less honest men descend for petty pelf! but I haven't time to work this out.

"Soon Mr. Payne came on board, the wine-merchant prince, whom W. had asked to show us the Island and give us our deck chairs. To this most kind friend we are indebted for a memorable experience. He proposed, though it was night, to take us on shore, and I, the three children, and Mrs. B. followed him down the ship's side to one of the many boats that were lurching and bumping at the foot of the ladder. The first boat tilted over on its side and nearly spilt her two rowers, who rolled out maledictions as the water filled her and lost them their chance of us. We jumped into another and were rowed to the little jetty. On arriving in the town we found little hooded sledges, drawn by small oxen, waiting. We boarded two of these Madeira cabs and drove up to the Casino, our cabmen running by the side and whooping to the oxen. We entered an enchanted garden waving with palms, pines, and blue gum-trees, and other shadowy, dark-foliaged trees, while glossy and feathery shrubs of every type of tropical loveliness bore blossoms which shimmered white, red, and purple in the moonlight. There was a heavy scent of magnolia flowers. Was it all a dream to wake from in Sloane Street? I was in that murky region only three days ago. Was it all a dream? It might be, for things were getting mixed and incongruous. Now cigar smoke kills the magnolia, and some electric lamplights among the trees are jarring with the moon. We suddenly step into a pavilion where a band is playing, and I see smart men and women, very fashionably attired in evening dress, some of them raking in money at the roulette table. We do not stay long there, for we did not land to see such banalities, and, regaining the garden solitudes, make for our bullock sledges, which are to take us up 2000 feet higher through vine-trellised lanes all paved by those polished pebbles set edgewise for the sledges to run smoothly on. Away we go, our cabmen now and then placing a tallow candle enclosed in a bag under the sledge runners to lubricate them, or there would be disagreeable friction. As soon as one runner has passed over the emaciated candle the man on that side throws the candle across to the man on the other, who, stooping, and always at a trot, performs the same juggernaut process on his side. The men are handsome and healthy fellows, wearing their coats hanging loose on their shoulders over snowy shirts. They never speak to Mr. Payne with covered heads.

"There is a funicular railway up this mountain, but it does not work at night, and we thus have a taste of the vanishing Past. Far more effective, this railway, for it climbs the hill boldly and with uncovered sides, whilst our old road is hemmed in by high vineyard walls, and the straining of the little goaded oxen is amongst those belongings of the Past which I will gladly see vanish with it.



"IN THE HOLLOW OF HIS HAND"

"On our way up the incline, which would be impossible to horses and to wheels, our kind *cicerone* invited us to

see his garden and the view of the bay and the great ocean which was swelling away in the light towards Morocco. It was a lovely garden, and we crept about it round the little cosy house, and looked up at the closed shutters, within which *la famille Payne* lay slumbering. We even went on tip-toe through the sitting-rooms, which the owner, looking as though he was burgling his own house, lit with a little lantern. In one there was a parrot asleep, in another an engraving of the 'Roll Call,' and again I began to think I might be dreaming and would wake, with tears, in Sloane Street. But the 'dream' was solid and we continued our upward progress with four additional oxen to each sledge and double whooping, and swearing, and prodding, for the gradient now was terrific. At the end of the sledge track we halted, and, getting out, we climbed to the hill top on foot and from there beheld a lovely sight—deep valleys and vine-clad hills and the great ocean beyond, and our Castle Liner blazing with electric light more than 2000 feet below in the profound calm of Funchal Bay. The stars were very lustrous and the 'Scorpion's Heart' aflame with red and green. We then took a mysterious walk in brilliant moonlight and intense black shadow to the edge of a great ravine or *coral*, from the bottom of which rose the harsh sound of a torrent, invisible in the shadow. Sugarcanes waved in the night breeze and banana plants rustled and whispered, but no one was awake in all the land but our little party.

"Dreamlike again, on our way back to where we had got out of the sledges, we had tea in another enchanted garden at 2 A.M. Our cabmen had hammered at that garden gate a long time, looking like stage peasants knocking at an operatic moonlit portal, before the waiter could be awakened, and by the time we returned from our walk the sleepy creature in tail coat, but minus his tie, was ready for us. When we passed that mysterious threshold we found ourselves in a garden full of the scent of box hedges and tinkling with fountains. We walked in the chequered shadow cast by palms and cypresses, and, soothed by the sound of running water, we felt we would like to stay there till the dawn. What a night to impress the children's minds with! Our tea was hilarious, in an arbour facing the ocean, but our hilarity was to reach its climax when we got into two toboggans, three people in each, and *slithered* down the 2000 foot declivity which our oxen had so painfully and slowly drawn us up. The oxen had vanished with the sledges and the drivers, and a new set of men piloted us down the tremendous incline.

"Nothing makes me laugh more than a toboggan in full flight with its helpless load. I had the pace moderated, in spite of protests, for I really did not care to have a variation of the too recent Bay of Biscay; but the toboggans got out of hand sometimes or had to be given their heads round the corners. It was vertigo then.

"Ah, good night, or rather good morning, peerless Madeira!"

Then followed days of blue weather and ever-increasing heat. A lonely voyage—not a sail to be seen. In that long-drawn-out monotony we made the most of trivialities.

I read in my diary one night in the Tropics:—

"There is to be a fancy-dress ball to-night, in connection with crossing the Line the other day, I suppose; the second class passengers are to come over and dance with the first class on the gaily decorated promenade deck. I am pleased at the appearance of the three children. C. has made up from some Eastern muslins a very coquettish Turkish costume with a little cap, which becomes her to my entire satisfaction. E. looks the typical 'duck' in a poke bonnet all over little pink roses, and I have buckled up little M. in a colonial cavalry 'rig,' slouched hat and all, Captain S. lending his sabre, which is somewhat longer than the temporary owner."

.....

Here I must interpolate the statement of certain facts which will enable you more fully to sympathise with me in the catastrophe that closes this mid-ocean episode.

You must know that white servants are impossible to find at the Cape, and one must bring all one's staff out with one, "for better, for worse," it may be for three, four, five years. If any turn out badly, it is true you may send them home, but—who is to replace them? I could not persuade my cook at Dover Castle to undertake this expatriation, her courage failing her at the last moment, and I had to find an untried substitute. She was a Dane with the blood of generations of bellicose Vikings coursing through her veins, and I had watched her daily on the other deck from afar with apprehensions.

.....

"The ball is over and I feel decidedly limp. I thought I was going to have a pleasant evening. I was sitting with Lady — and all the others who were not masquerading, enjoying the sight of the figures in all kinds of extempore costumes appearing on the deck from below and mustering prior to setting to, the band playing a spirited waltz, when there slowly emerged from the saloon stairway, as though rising from the waves she rules—Britannia! First a high brass helmet with scarlet crest, then a trident held in one hand, a shield in the other, and the folds of the Union Jack draping her commanding form. She stepped on deck. 'I say,' said a voice, 'this is *the* success of the evening; who is it?' 'Who is it?' you heard on every side. 'Who is it?' asked Lady — turning to me. 'My cook,' I faintly answered. The last speaker knew her South Africa, and all the possibilities of the future might have spoken in my face to judge by the choking laughter that caused her precipitate withdrawal. Each time she ventured back within sight of my smileless face the fit seized her again. Later on I saw Britannia dancing in a small set of Lancers hand in hand with the Marchioness. Shall I ever get her harnessed now?"

I went back to hang over the bulwarks and lose myself among the stars.

And so we made our way athwart the world. Each evening every one went to scan the chart where the little "atom's" progress was marked with, to us, an all too short pen-stroke, showing the distance covered in the last twenty-four hours. And in time the sad South Atlantic broke up the exquisite blue weather of the Tropics.

The diary goes on: "To-night we saw the Pole Star set for the last time. A profound melancholy—a sense of losing a life-companion—falls on the mind. The child who has just seen its old nurse turn a bend in the road and disappear looks with rueful eyes on the bright newcomer. The Southern Cross and all the new stars will never fill the void left by the constellations which I have watched above the beloved scenes of the Northern World. My thoughts follow the Pole Star beyond the dark rim of the horizon. Dear old friend! I shall not feel content, no matter how beautiful I shall find the Southern heavens, till the joyful night when the captain of the Homeward Bound tells us we shall see thee rise. When will that be—in two—in three—years?"

I spoke just now of the "sad" South Atlantic. To me it will always be the saddest part of the world. The sky above it loses the transparent and radiant quality of blue ("less blue than radiant," Mrs. Browning happily says of the Florentine sky) and takes more of a cobalt quality, and the tone of the sea follows suit. The effect of the diminishing

warmth also chills one morally and physically, and one knows that the best is passed. The phrase, "a waste of waters," comes constantly to the mind.

The following extract from the diary will show how this mournful sentiment of the South Atlantic was one day accentuated—stamped, as it were, with the seal of sorrow, on our return voyage, four days from Cape Town. "We had a burial at sea, the forlornest thing I have ever witnessed. A poor consumptive governess, travelling alone, died last night, who must have been far too ill to be put on board ship. She was buried at eleven this morning.

"We were kneeling near the body, which lay on a bier shaped like a tray, covered with the Union Jack, at the open gangway overhanging the dreary tossing waters. Not a glimpse of blue sky above, the dense clouds shut it out. As she belonged to our Church, W., in uniform, read the prayers and Captain C. the responses. When the prayers were ended the bier was tilted by the six sailors who had been grasping it all through the service. The poor little body, sewn up in sacking, darted out, with a rattle of the leaden weights, from under the covering flag and fell with a loud splash into the black ocean; the flowers that had been placed on it scattered on the foam, and, as the ship scarcely stopped, these were soon left behind to sink and disappear. He who read the prayers said to me when all was over, 'Christ walks the waters as well as the land.'"

Two days after I read: "A concert this evening, with some comic songs. I noticed the piano was draped with the same Union Jack that covered the poor girl two days ago."

.....
One can hardly realize what a sailing voyage of this magnitude must have been in the old days. Our modern impatience can hardly endure the thought. The announcement one evening that at dawn we should sight Table Mountain was extremely pleasant. The arrival had the never-fading charm. "I see papa!" sang out little M. "How are the children?" hailed papa from the quay. "All well!" And we land on utterly new ground to begin a new experience. A short train journey, turning the flank of Table Mountain, brings us to our new home at Rosebank, where I find a pair of shapely Cape ponies harnessed to the Victoria awaiting us at the station.



A CORNER OF OUR GARDEN AT ROSEBANK



CHAPTER II

AT ROSEBANK, CAPE COLONY

“STRANGE land; strange birds with startling cries; strange flowers; strange scents! I received a bouquet of welcome on my arrival composed of grass-green flowers with brilliant rose-coloured leaves. Where am I? *Where* are the points of the compass?

“I was watching the sun travelling to his setting this evening, and, forgetting I was perforce facing North to watch him, he seemed to be sloping down towards the East! And lo! when he was gone, the crescent moon on the wrong side of the sunset and turned the wrong way. And a cold south wind bringing melancholy messages from the Antarctic. ‘There has been a storm in the south,’ some one said, and the words struck drearly on my mind’s ear.

“My Bible, so full of imagery taken from the aspects of Nature, is turned inside out.

Arise (depart), north wind; and come, O south wind; blow through my garden, and let the aromatical spices thereof flow (Canticles iv. 16).

“My Shakespeare is upside down.

At Christmas I no more desire a rose
Than wish a snow in May’s new-fangled mirth.—
Love’s Labour’s Lost.

“Here roses load the Christmas air with sweetness, and May ushers in the snow upon the mountains.

When proud-pied April, dress’d in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in everything.—*Sonnet.*

“Here April is in the ‘sear and yellow.’

“Yesterday a furnace-blast swooped down upon us from the great deserts to the north, and I feel I shall never be myself while I continue to see my shadow at noonday projected southward. But enough of grumbling for the present.

“Nowhere have I seen such starlight as streams upon the earth from the Milky Way, which belts the whole heavens here with silver. I don’t know why I have never seen the Milky Way so distinct and splendid in the Northern Hemisphere. It is the glory of the South African nights, and I have the pleasure, too, of seeing the entire sweep of the ‘Scorpion’s’ tail, superb scroll of blazing stars. I knew the Southern Cross would be disappointing, and so was not disappointed.

“It gyrates over the Pole in a way to greatly astonish the uninitiated. The other evening, dressing for an evening function, I saw it before my window upright, and on coming home in the small hours, behold it on its head!

“I cannot hope ever to convey to the mind of those who have not experienced Cape Colony the extraordinarily powerful local feeling of these days and nights. Melancholy they are—at least to me—but most, most beautiful and *pungently* poetical. The aromatic quality of the odours that permeate the air suggests that word. Yet all is too strange to win the heart of a newcomer, however much his eyes and mind may be captivated.

“If an artist wanted to accomplish that apparently impossible feat of painting Fairyland direct from Nature, without one touch supplied out of his own fancy, he would only have to come here. There are effects of light and colour on these landscapes that I never saw elsewhere. The ordinary laws seem set aside. For instance, you expect a palm-tree to tell dark against the sunset. Oh, dear me no, not necessarily here. I saw one a tender green, and the sand about it was in a haze of softest rose-colour, through which shone the vivid orange light of the sunset behind it. Incredible altogether are the colours at sunset, but all so fleeting. And there is no after-glow here as in Egypt and Italy; the instant the glory of the setting sun is gone all is over and all is grey.

“Even the melancholy-quaint sound of the frogs through the night suggests fairy tales. It is appealing in its own way. I thought the Italian marenna frog noisy, but no one can imagine what an orgy of shrill croaking fills the nights here. They are everywhere, these irrepressibles, though invisible; near your head, far away, under your feet, at your side, in the tree-tops, in the streams, for ever springing their rattles with renewed zest. I shall never hear nocturnal frogs again without being transported to these regions of strange and melancholy nights.

“Table Mountain rises square and precipitous above our garden, far above the simmer of the frogs, and looks like an altar in the pure white light that falls upon it from the Milky Way. How still, how holy in its repose of the long ages it looks, and the thought comes to one’s mind, ‘Would that all the evil brought to South Africa by the finding of the gold could be gathered together and burnt on that altar as a peace offering!’

“On this Rosebank side there is nothing that jars with the majestic feeling of Table Mountain, but to see what we English have done at its base on the other side, at Cape Town, is to see what man can do in his little way to outrage Nature’s dignity. The Dutch never jarred; their old farm-houses with white walls, thatched roofs, green

shutters, and rounded Flemish gables look most harmonious in this landscape. Wherever we have colonized there you will see the corrugated iron dwelling, the barbed-wire fence, the loathsome advertisement. We talk so much of the love of the beautiful, and yet no people do so much to spoil beauty as we do wherever we settle down, all the world over. I respect the Dutch saying; 'The eye must have something'—beauty is a necessity to moral health. A clear sky and a far horizon have more value to the national mind than we care to recognize, and though the smoking factory that falsifies England's skies and blurs her horizons may fill our pockets with gold, it makes us poorer by dulling our natures. I am sure that a clear physical horizon induces a clear mental one.

"As you gaze, enraptured, at the rosy flush of evening on the mountains across "False Bay" from some vantage point on the road to Simon's Town, your eye is caught by staring letters in blatant colours in the foreground. "Keller's boots are the best"; "Guinea Gold Cigarettes"; "Go to the Little Dust Pan, Cape Town, for your Kitchen things." I *won't* go to the Little Dust Pan. Of all the horrors, a dust pan at Cape Town, where your eyes are probably full enough of dust already from the arid streets, and your face stinging with the pebbles blown into it by a bitter "sou'easter"? I once said in Egypt I knew nothing more trying than paying calls in a "hamseem," but a Cape Town "sou'easter" disarranging you, under similar circumstances, is a great deal more exasperating.

"I am told the Old Cape Town, when Johannesburg was as yet dormant, was a simple and comely place—its white houses, so well adapted to this intensely sunny climate, were deep set in wooded gardens, a few of which have so far escaped the claws of the jerry builder. (O United States, what things you send us—"jerry," "shoddy" —!) But now the glaring streets, much too wide, and left unfinished, are lined with American "Stores" with cast-iron porticoes, above which rise buildings of most pretentious yet nondescript architecture, and the ragged outskirts present stretches of corrugated iron shanties which positively rattle back the clatter of a passing train or tram-car. And all around lie the dust bins of the population, the battered tin can, the derelict boot. No authorities seem yet to have been established to prevent the populace, white, brown, and black, from throwing out all their old refuse where they like. Some day things may be taken in hand, but at present this half-baked civilization produces very dreadful results. There is promise of what, some day, may be done in the pleasing red Parliament House and the beautiful public gardens of the upper town. There is such a rush for gold, you see! No one cares for poor Cape Town as a town. The adventurer is essentially a bird of passage. Man and Nature contrast more unfavourably to the former here than elsewhere, and the lines,

Where every prospect pleases
And only man is vile,

ring in my ears all day.

"Altogether our Eden here is sadly damaged, and I am sorry it should be my compatriots who are chiefly answerable for the ugly patches on so surpassingly beautiful a scene. Our sophisticated life, too, is out of place in this unfinished country, and we ought to live more simply, as the Dutch do, and not feel it necessary to carry on the same *ménage* as in London. Liveried servants in tall hats and cockades irritate me under such a sun, and the butler in his white choker makes me gasp. An extravagant London-trained cook is more than ever trying where all provisions are so absurdly dear. The native servant in his own suitable dress, as in India and Egypt, does not exist down here.

"One of the chief reasons, I find, as I settle down in my new surroundings, for the feeling of incompleteness which I experience, is the fact of this country's having no history. We get forlorn glimpses of the Past, when the old Dutch settlers used to hear the roar of the lions outside Cape Town Fort of nights; and, further back, we get such peeps as the quaint narratives of the early explorers allow us, but beyond those there is the great dark void.



THE INVERTED CRESCENT

"This is all from my own point of view, and I know there is one, an Africander born,^[1] who, with strong and vivid pen, writes with sympathy of the charms of Italy, but only expands into heartfelt home-fervour when returning to the red soil and atmospheric glamour of her native veldt. This personal way of looking at things makes the value of all art, literary and pictorial, to my mind. Set two artists of equal merit to paint the same scene together; the two pictures will be quite unlike each other. I am of those who believe that picture will live longest which contains the most of the author's own thought, provided the author's thought is worthy, and the technical qualities are good, well understood."

[1] Olive Schreiner.

I will end my South African sketch by one more page of diary, which, in recording a day's expedition to the Paarl, gives an impression of the Cape landscape which may stand as typical of all its inland scenery.

"On Whitsun-eve we had a most enchanting expedition to Stellenbosch and the Paarl, which I will describe here. W., I, the children, and the B.'s, formed the party. We left home just at sunrise, the heavy dew warning us of a very hot winter's day, though it was then cold enough. We took the train to Stellenbosch, and I was in ecstasies over the perfect loveliness of the scenes we passed through as the train climbed the incline towards those deeply serrated mountains which we were to pierce by and by. Looking back as we rose I could more fully appreciate the majestic proportions of Table Mountain, at whose base we live, and, when a long way off it stood above the plain in solitude, disclosed in its entirety, pale amethyst in the white morning light, I was more than ever filled with a sense of the majesty of this land which this dominating mountain seemed to gather up into itself and typify.

"Quite different in outline are the fantastic mountains we passed athwart to-day, and nowhere have I seen such intense unmixed ultramarine shadows as those that palpitate in their deep kloofs in contrast with the rosy warmth of their sunlit buttresses and jagged peaks. And as to the foregrounds here, when you get into the primeval wilderness, what words can I find to give an idea of their colouring, and of the profusion of the wild shrubs, all so spiky and aromatic, and some so weird, so strange, that cover the sandy plains? Here are some notes. In distance, blue mountains; middle distance, pine woods, dark; in foreground, gold-coloured shrubs, islanded in masses of bronze foliage full of immense thistle-shaped pink and white flowers; bright green rushes standing eight feet high, with brown heads waving; black cattle knee-deep in the rich herbage and a silver-grey stork slowly floating across the blue of the still sky.

"But this most paintable and decorative vegetation is not friendly to the intruder. These exquisitely toned shrubs with wild strong forms are full of repellent spikes which, like bayonets, they seem to level at you if, lured by the gentle perfume of their blossoms, you approach eye and nose too near. Depend upon it, this country was intended for thick-skinned blacks.

"As you get farther from town influences there appear much better human forms in the landscape, and to-day I was greatly struck with the appearance of an ox-waggon drawn by twelve big-horned beasts, and upon its piled-up load stood picturesque male and female Malays in white and gay colours—quite a triumphal car. A negro with immense whip walked by the side, and behind rose a long avenue of old stone-pines, and at the end of the vista the blue sky. These stone-pine avenues that border the red-earthed highways are among the most delightful of the many local beauties of the Cape, and such stone-pines! Old giants bigger than any I have seen on the Riviera. There are dense forests of them here, lovely things to look down on, with their soft, velvety masses of round tops of a rich dark green, looking like one solid mass. The wise Dutch who planted them had a law whereby any one felling one of these pines was bound to plant two saplings in its stead. We are doing a great deal of the felling without the planting.

"At Stellenbosch we got out, and, to my pleasure, I saw a long sort of char-à-banc driven at a hand gallop into the station yard, drawn by three mules and three horses—the vehicle ordered by W. to convey us to the 'Paarl.' And why 'Paarl'? Deep among the mountains rises a double peak, bearing imbedded in each summit an immense smooth rock rounded like a black titanic 'Pearl' that glistens in the sun as it beats on its polished surface. Thither we blithely sped, one driver holding the multitudinous reins of our mixed team, the other manœuvring with both hands his immensely long whip, the gyrations of the thong being an interesting thing to watch as he touched up now this beast and now that. They have a way in this country of keeping up a uniform trot uphill, downhill, and on the level, but stopping frequently to breathe the team." (Ah! give me road travel with horses—it is more *human* than the motor!) "After an enchanting stage through wild mountain gorges we came to an oak fixed upon by W. beforehand as marking our halting place, and there the six beasts were 'out-spanned.' The simple harness was just slipped off and laid along on the road where the animals stood, and then they were allowed to stray into the wild, tumbling bush as they liked and have a roll, if so minded. Then we lit a fire and spread our repast under the shade of the oak at the edge of a wood that sloped down to a mountain stream. All round the solemn mountains, all about us fragrant aromatic flowers and the call of wild African birds! I can well understand the passionate love an Africander-born must feel for his country. I know none that has such strong, saturating local sentiment. The horses and mules, whose feet I had espied several times waving in spurts of rolling above the undergrowth, being collected and 'in-spanned,' we set off for the Paarl Station and descended back into the Plain by rail at sunset; and as we left the mountains behind us they were flushing in the glory from the West, their shadows remaining of the same astonishing ultramarine they had kept all day. In any other country the blue would have changed somewhat, but here I don't expect anything to follow any known rules—I accept the phenomena of things around me as time goes on, and have ceased to wonder. Oh! vision of loveliness, strange and unique, which this day has given me, never to be forgotten."

.....

My great regret is that I had so little time to ply my paints and try at least to make studies which would now be very precious to me. How little I knew the shortness of my sojourn! The two little Cape ponies (with much of the Arab in them) were in almost daily requisition along those great pine-bordered, red-earthed roads, to take me for my return calls, or a portion of them. I fear I left many unreturned towards the end. There were the Dutch as well as the English, a large circle. I had sketching expeditions projected which never came off, with a clever Dutch lady, who did charming water-colours of beautiful Constantia and the striking country above Simon's Bay, and the true "Cape of Good Hope" beyond. She had battled with snakes in the pursuit of her art, and in the woods had sustained the stone-throwing of the baboons, who made a target of her as she sat at work. I was willing for the baboon bombardment, and even would chance the snakes, as one chances everything, to wrest but a poor little water-colour from nature.

Two events which, in that tremendous year '99, were of more than usual importance loom large in my memory

of the Cape—that is, the Queen’s Birthday Review in May, and the opening of Parliament on the 14th July. The Birthday Review on the Plain at Green Point was the ditto of others I had seen on the sands of Egypt, on the green sward of Laffan’s Plain at Aldershot, on the Dover Esplanade, and wherever W. had been in command; but this time, as he rode up on his big grey to give the Governor the Royal Salute before leading the “Three Cheers for Her Majesty the Queen!” a prophet might have seen the War Spectre moving through the ranks of red-coats behind the General.

At the opening of Parliament we ladies almost filled the centre of the “House,” and I was able to study the scene from very close. The Dutch Members, on being presented to the Speaker, took the oath by raising the right hand, whereas the English, of course, kissed the Book. The proceedings were all on the lines followed at Westminster, the Governor keeping his hat on as representing the Sovereign. The opening words of “the Speech from the Throne” sounded hollow. They proclaimed amongst other things *urbi et orbi*, that we were at peace with the South African Republics.

.....
“And now,” says the diary, “Good-bye, South Africa, for ever! I am glad that in you I have had experience of one of the most enchanting portions of this earth!”

.....
As you know that experience only lasted five months after all. We left on the 23rd August ‘99 on a day of blinding rain, which, as the ship moved off, drew like a curtain across that country which I felt we were leaving to a fast-approaching trouble. The war cloud was descending. It burst in blood and fire a few weeks later and deepened the sense of melancholy with which I shall ever think of that far-away land.

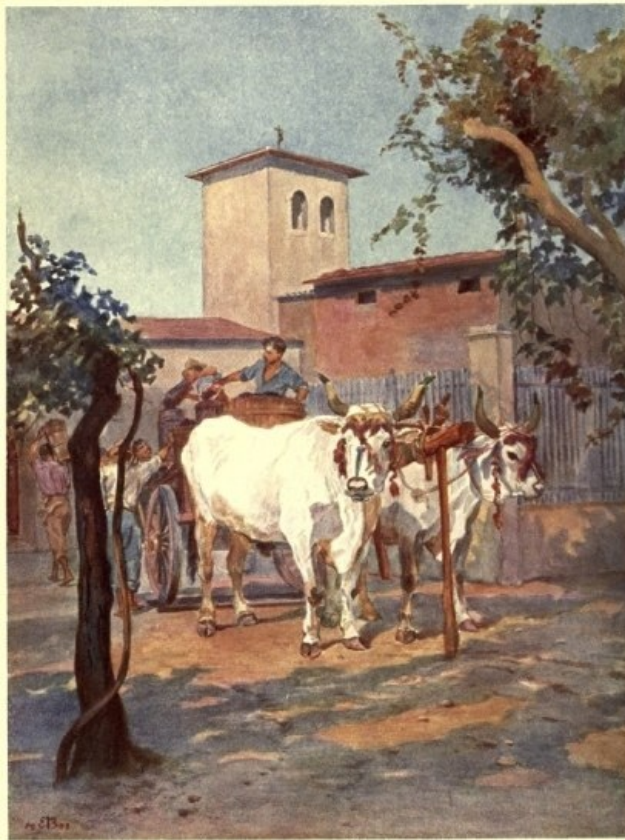


THE CAPE “FLATS”

IV

ITALY





BRINGING IN THE GRAPES

CHAPTER I

VINTAGE-TIME IN TUSCANY

A DESCENT from the Apennine on a September evening into Tuscany, with the moon nearly full—that moon which in a few days will be shining in all its power upon the delights of the vintage week—this I want to recall to you who have shared the pleasure of such an experience with me.

A descent into the Garden of Italy, spread out wide in a haze of warm air—can custom stale the feeling which that brings to heart and mind?

Railway travel has its poetry, its sudden and emotional contrasts and surprises. But a few hours ago we were in the foggy drizzle of an autumn morning at Charing Cross, and, ere we have time to be fagged by a too-long journey, our eyes and brain receive the image of the Tuscan plain!

The train slows down for a moment on emerging from the last tunnel at the top of the mountain barrier; the grinding brakes are still, and for a precious instant we listen at the window for the old summer night sounds we remember and love. Yes! there they are; there *he* is, the dear old chirping, drumming, droning night-beetle in myriads at his old penetrating song, persistent as the sicala's through the dog days, local in its suggestiveness as the corncrake's endless saw among the meadow-sweet all through the Irish summer night.

But, *avanti!* Down the winding track with flying sparks from the locked wheels, every metre to the good; down to the red domes of Pistoja; forward, then, on the level, to Florence and all it holds.



How we English do love Italy! Somewhere in our colder nature flows a warm Gulf Stream of love for what is sunny and clear-skied and genial, and I think I may say, though my compatriots little realize it, that the evidences of a living faith which are inseparable from Italian landscape greatly add to the charm that attracts us to this land. What would her hills be if decapitated of the convents on their summits, with each its cypress-lined *Via Crucis* winding up the hillside? The time of the after-glow would be voiceless if deprived of the ringing of the Angelus. Dimly we perceive these things, or hardly recognise them as facts—nay, many of us still protest, *but they draw us to Italy.*

And now the arrival at Florence. The pleasure of dwelling on that arrival, when on the platform our friends await us with the sun of Italy in their looks! Then away we go with them in carriages drawn by those fast-trotting Tuscan ponies that are my wonder and admiration, with crack of whip and jingle of bells along the white moon-lit road to the great villa at Signa, where the vintage is about to begin.

To recall the happy labour of those precious three days of grape-picking in the mellow heat on the hillside, and then the all-pervading fumes of fermenting wine of the succeeding period in the courtyard of the *Fattoria*; the dull red hue of the crushed grapes that dyes all things, animate and inanimate, within the sphere of work, is one of the most grateful efforts of my memory. I see again the handsome laughing peasants, the white oxen, the flights of pigeons across the blue of the sky. The mental relaxation amidst all this activity of wholesome and natural labour, the complete change of scene, afford a blessed rest to one who has worked hard through a London winter and got

very tired of a London season. It is a patriarchal life here, and the atmosphere of good humour between landlord and tenant seems to show the land laws and customs of Tuscany to be in need of no reformer, the master and the man appearing to be nearer contentment than is the case anywhere else that I know of. You and I saw a very cheery specimen of the land system at grand old Caravaggio.



A SON OF THE SOIL, RIVIERA DI LEVANTE

Then the evenings! I know it is trite to talk of guitars and tenor voices under the moonlight, but Italy woos you back to many things we call "used up" elsewhere, and there is positive refreshment in hearing those light tenor voices, expressive of the light heart, singing the ever-charming *stornellos* of the country as we sit under the pergola after dinner each evening. The neighbours drop in and the guitar goes round with the coffee. Everybody sings who can, and, truth to say, some who can't. Many warm thanks to our kind friends, English and Italian (some are gone!), who gave you and me such unforgettable hospitality in '75, '76.

But lest all these guitarings and airy nothings of the gentle social life here should become oversweet, we can slip away from the rose-garden and climb up into the vineyards of the rustic *podere* that speak of wholesome peasant labour, of tillage—the first principle of man's existence on earth—and, among the practical pole-vines that bear the true wine-making grapes (not the dessert fruit of the garden *pergola*), have a quiet talk.

The starry sky is disclosed almost round the entire circle of the horizon, with "*Firenze la gentile*" in the distance on our right, the Apennine in front, and the sleeping plain trending away to the left to be lost in mystery. I want to talk to you of our experience of Italy the Beloved, from our earliest childhood until to-day.

What a happy chance it was that our parents should have been so taken with the *Riviera di Levante* as to return there winter after winter, alternately with the summers spent in gentle Kent or Surrey, during our childhood; not the French Riviera which has since become so sophisticated, but that purely Italian stretch of coast to the east of Genoa, ending in Porto Fino, that promontory which you and I will always hold as a sacred bit of the world. Why? There are as lovely promontories jutting out into the Mediterranean elsewhere? The child's love for the scenes of its early friendships with nature is a jealous love.

Our relations by marriage with the B. family admitted us into the centre of a very typical Italian home of the old order. I suppose that life was very like the life of eighteenth-century England—the domestic habits were curiously alike, and I cannot say I regret that their vogue is passing. We are thought to be so ridiculously fastidious, *noi altri inglesi*, and our parents were certainly not exceptional in this respect, and suffered accordingly.

The master of the house, the autocratic *padrone*, had been in the Italian Legion in Napoleon's Russian campaign, as you may remember, and the retreat from Moscow had apparently left certain indelible cicatrices on the old gentleman's temper. I can hear his stentorian voice even now calling to the servant (I think there was only one "living in," though there were about a dozen hangers-on) in the rambling old Palazzo without bells. "O—O—O, Mariuccia!" "Padrone!" you heard in a feminine treble from the remote regions of the kitchen upstairs, somewhere. Mariuccia would generally get a bit of the Italian legionary's mind when she came tumbling down the marble stairs. Madame la Generale appeared in the morning with a red handkerchief on her head and remained in corsetless *déshabillé* till the afternoon. Genoese was the home language, French was for society. No one spoke real Italian. They had not yet begun to "*Toscaneggiare*," as it grew to be the fashion to do when Italy became united. Don't you dislike to hear them?

What recollections our parents carried away from those visits to the Nervi household! How we used to love to hear mamma's accounts, for instance, of the night Lord Minto came to tea. Madame Gioconda had put the whole pound of choice green tea which she had bought at the English shop in Genoa into a large tea-pot requisitioned for

this rare English occasion. Poor mamma had the pouring of it out, and no deluges of hot water, brought by the astonished Mariuccia, could tame that ferocious beverage. I am sure the brave General never got more completely "bothered" by the Russian cannon than he did by the "gun-powder" that evening. Nowadays such a mistake could not happen when *il thè* is quite the fashion.

Italians still think it the right thing to visit England in November and go to Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham for their informing little tour. In those remote days it was the only way in which the few that ever ventured so far saw our lovely land. Mamma was constantly sent into a state of suppressed indignation by the stereotyped question, "Are there any flowers in England?" But I have not done with the old General. I remember we were so frightened of that Tartar that Papa used to have to propel us into the Presence, when, in the evenings, every one, big and little, sat down to dominoes or "tombola." Syrup and water and little cakes made of chestnut flour refreshed the company. The General's snuff was in the syrup, I firmly believed. We looked like two little martyrs as we went up to salute those shaking yellow cheeks on being sent to bed. Why are children put to these ordeals?

The living was frugal, the real "simple life" which some of us in England are pretending to lead to-day. But on certain occasions, such as Shrove Tuesday, for instance, ah! no effects of oriental feasting could surpass the repletion with which each guest left the festive board. Mariuccia had help for three days previous to such regalings, during which one heard the tapping of the chopper in the kitchen, preparing the force-meat for the national dish, the succulent *ravioli*, as one passed within earshot of that remote vaulted hall.

And do you remember (you are a year my junior, and a year makes a great difference in the child's mind) a certain night when there was a ball at our villa on the Albaro shore, and the shutters of the great "*sala*" were thrown open to let in the moonlight at midnight? A small barque lay in the offing, surrounded by little boats, and a cheer came over the sea in answer to what the people over there, seeing the sudden illumination from the chandeliers, took for our flashing signal of "God-speed!" They were a detachment of Garibaldi's Redshirts on their way to liberate Southern Italy. The grown-ups on our side went down to supper, and our little cropped heads remained looking at the barque in the moon's broad reflection long after we were supposed to be asleep. I had seen the Liberator himself talking to the gardener at the —'s villa, where he was staying, at Quarto, the day before he sailed for Messina.

We were certainly an unconventional family, and we were so happy in our roving through the land of sun. But if you and I are inclined to bemoan too much modernism in that Italy we so jealously love, oh! do not let us forget the gloom of some of those old palaces which we had a mind to inhabit a *l'Italianne*, on bad winter nights—the old three-beaked oil lamps in the bedrooms serving, as our dear father used to say, only to "make darkness visible"—the wind during the great storms setting some loose shutter flapping in uninhabited upper regions of the house; the dark places which Charles Dickens in his *Pictures from Italy* says he noticed in all the Italian houses he slept in on his tour, which were not wholly innocent of scorpions. The marble floors and the paucity of fireplaces did not give comfort for the short winters; but how glorious those old houses became as soon as the cold was gone; shabby, ramshackle, and splendid, we loved them "for all in all."

In certain things modern Italy affords us an easier life. We are given to nagging at the Italians for their dreadful want of taste in spoiling the beauty of their cities, but in the old days we were nagging at them for their dirt. Now Rome is the cleanest capital in the world. Some one said it is more than clean, it is dusted. And is not the Society for the Protection of Animals in *existence*, at least? With what derision such an institution would have been heard of in our childhood's days—a suggestion of those "mad English."

Do you call to mind what scenes used to occur whenever mamma came out with us, between her and the muleteers? I can see her now, in the fulness of her English beauty, flying out one day at a carter for flogging and kicking his mules that were hardly able to drag a load up the Albaro Hill. This was the dialogue. Mamma—"Voi siete un cattivo!" Muleteer—"E voi siete bella!" Mamma—"Voi siete un birbante!" Muleteer—"E voi siete bella!" Mamma—"Voi siete uno scelerato!" Muleteer—"E voi siete bella!" And so on, till we had reached the bottom of the cruel hill, mamma at the end of her *crescendo* of fulminations and the man's voice, still calling "E voi siete bella" in imitation of her un-Genoese phraseology, lost in distance at the top. "I shall get a fit some day," were her first English words. Poor dear mother, the shooting of the singing-birds in spring, the dirt, the noise, the flies, the mosquitoes—so many thorns in her Italian rose! Yet how she loved that rose, but not more than the sweet violet of our England that had no such thorns. The music in the churches, too, was trying in those days, and to none more so than to that music-loving soul. We have seen her doing her best to fix her mind on her devotions, with her fingers in her ears, and her face puckered up into an excruciated bunch. I hope Pius X. has enforced the plain-chant everywhere, and stopped those raspings of secular waltzes on sour fiddles that were supposed to aid our fervour. But I am nagging. As a Northerner, I have no right to lecture the Italians as to what sort of music is best for devotion, nor to tell them that the dressing of their sacred images in gaudy finery on festival days is not the way to deepen reverence. The Italians do what suits them best in these matters, and if our English taste is offended let us stay at home.

Well, well, here below there is nothing bright without its shadow. When we had the delicious national costumes we had the dirt and the cruelty. But why, I ask, cannot we keep the national dress, the local customs, the picturesqueness while we gain the cleanly and the kind? Every time I revisit Italy I miss another bit of colour and pleasing form amongst the populations. In Rome not a cloak is to be seen on the citizens, that black cloak lined with red or green they used to throw over the left shoulder, toga-wise—only old left-off ulsters or overcoats from Paris or Berlin. Not a red cap on the men of Genoa; the *pezzotto* and *mezzero*, most feminine headgear for the women, are extinct there. Ladies in Rome are even shy of wearing the black mantilla to go to the Vatican, and put it on in the cloak-room of the palace, removing it again to put on the barbarous Parisian hat for the streets. When we foreign ladies drive in our mantillas to the Audiences we are stared at! Even my old friends the red, blue, and green umbrellas of portly dimensions, formerly dear to the clergy, no longer light up the sombre clerical garb. Did I not see a flight of bare-footed Capuchins, last time in Rome, put up, every monk of them, a black Gingham when a shower came on, and I was expecting an efflorescence of my fondly-remembered Gamps? Next time I go the other bit of clerical colour will have vanished, and I shall find them using white pocket-handkerchiefs instead of the effective red bandana.

Well, but, you are told, the beggars are cleared out, those persistent unfortunates who used to thrust their deformities and diseases before you wherever you turned, with the wailing refrain, "*Misericordia, signore!*" "*Un povero zoppo!*" "*Un cieco!*" "*Ho fame!*" etc. etc. But they sunned themselves and ate their bread and onions where they liked (not where *we* liked) in perfect liberty. Where are they now? In dreary poorhouses, I suppose, out of sight,

regularly fed and truly miserable. I am afraid that much of our modern comfort is owing simply to the covering up of unpleasantnesses. In the East, especially, life is seen with the cover taken off, and many painful sights and many startling bits of the reality of life spoil the sunshine for us there for a while. But worse things are in the London streets, only "respectably" covered up, and I am sure that more cruelty is committed by the ever-increasing secret work of the vivisector than ever wrung the heart of the compassionate in the old days in the open street.

And there, as we sit on the hillside above Signa, lies Florence, just discernible in the far-off plain, where I learnt so much of my art. Those frescoes of Masaccio, Andrea del Sarto, and all those masters of the human face who revelled in painting every variety of human type, how they augmented my taste that way! Nothing annoyed me so much as the palpable use of one model in a crowded composition. Take a dinner-party at table—will you ever see two noses alike as you run your eye along the guests? Even in a regiment of evenly matched troops, all of one nationality, I ask you to show me two men in the ranks sharing the same nose!

Ah! those days I spent in the cloisters of the SS. Annuziata, making pencil copies of Andrea's figures in the series of frescoes illustrating the life of St Philip. It was summer-time, and the tourists only came bothering me towards the end. That hot summer, when I used to march into Florence, accompanied by little Majolina, in the still-early mornings, when the sicala was not yet in full chirp for the day! Four days a week to my master's studio under the shadow of the Medici Chapel, and two to my dear cloisters; the Sunday at our villa under Fiesole. Happy girl!

I see in my diary this brilliant adaptation of Coleridge's lines—

"'Tis sweet to him who all the week
Through city crowds must push his way, etc."

'Tis sweet to her who all the week
With brush and paint must work her way
To stroll thro' florence vineyards cool
And hallow thus the Sabbath Day.

I have much to thank my master Guiseppe Bellucci for, who drilled me so severely, carrying on the instruction I had the advantage to receive from thorough-going Richard Burchett the head-master at South Kensington—never-to-be-forgotten South Kensington.

It seems a shame to be saying so much about Florence and not to pause a few minutes to give the other a little hand-shake in passing. There I began my art-student life, than which no part of an artist's career can be more free from care or more buoyed up with aspirations for the future. Dear early days spent with those bright and generous comrades, my fellow-students, so full of enthusiasm over what they called my "promise"—I have all those days chronicled in the old diaries. There I recall the day I was promoted to the "Life Class" from the "Antique"—a joyful epoch; and the Sketching Club where "old D——," the second master, used to give "Best" nearly every time to Kate Greenaway and "Second Best" to me. What joy when I got a "Best" one fine day. She and I raced neck and neck with those sketches after that. The "Life Class" was absorbingly interesting. But how nervous and excited I felt at grappling with my first living model. He was a fine old man (but with a bibulous eye) costumed to represent "Cranmer walking to the Tower." I see in the diary, "Cranmer walked rather unsteadily to the Tower to-day, and we all did badly in consequence." Then came one of Cromwell's Ironsides whose morion gave him a perpetual headache, followed by my first full-length, a costume model in tights and slashed doublet whom we spitefully called "Spindle-Shanks" and greatly disliked. What was my surprise, long years afterwards, to stumble upon my "Spindle-Shanks" as "Christopher Columbus," by the celebrated painter of etc. etc." I then remembered I had made a present of him, when finished, to our "char," much to her embarrassment, I should think. However, she seems to have got rid of the "white elephant" with profit to herself in course of time. But I must not let myself loose on those glorious student days, so full of work and of play, otherwise I would wander too far away from my subject. It was tempting to linger over that hand-shake.

I don't think I ever felt such heat as in Florence. As the July sun was sending every one out of the baking city, shutting up the House of Deputies, and generally taking the pith out of things, I remember Bellucci coming into the studio one day with his hair in wisps, and hinting that it would be as well for me to give myself *un mesetto di riposo*. I did take that "little month of rest" at our villa, and sketched the people and the oxen, and mixed a great deal in peasant society, benefitting thereby in the loss of my Genoese twang under the influence of their most grammatical Tuscan. The peasant is the most honourable, religious, and philosophical of mankind. I feel always safe with peasants and like their conversation and ways. They lead the natural life. Before daylight, in midsummer, one heard them directing their oxen at the plough, and after the mid-day siesta they were back at their work till the Ave Maria. It was a large family that inhabited the peasant quarters of our villa and worked the landlord's vineyards. How they delighted in my sketches, in giving me sittings in the intervals of work, in seeing me doing amateur harvesting with a sickle and helping (?) them to bind the wheat sheaves and sift the grain. I must often have been in the way, now I think of it, but never a hint did these ladies and gentlemen of the horny hand allow to escape to my confusion. Carlotta, the eldest girl, read me some of the "Jerusalem Delivered" one full-moon night, to show me how easily one could read small print by the Italian moonlight. Her mother invited me to dine with the family one day as they were having a rare repast. Cencio had found two hedgehogs in a hollow olive-tree, and the *ragout* that ensued must be tasted by the *signorina*. Through the door of the kitchen where we dined on that occasion the two white oxen were seen reposing in the next apartment after their morning's work. After tasting the *spinoso* stew, I begged to be allowed to take a stool in the corner and sketch the whole family at table, and with the perfect grace of those people I was welcomed to do so, and I got them all in as they sucked their hedgehog bones in concert. You were reading Keats in one of the arbours, meanwhile, I remember.

I loved those days at Florence where I felt I was making the most of my time and getting on towards the day when I should paint my first "real" picture. When next I visited Florence with you for those memorable vintages at Caravaggio in '75, '76, which I recalled just now to your remembrance, I had painted my first "real" picture and received in London more welcome than I deserved or hoped for.

Twice I have revisited the outside of my Florentine studio in recent years, not daring to go in. Bellucci is long dead and I don't know who is there now. Standing under that tall window I have reviewed my career since the days I worked there. I rejoice to know that my best works are nearly all in public galleries or in the keeping of my Sovereign. To the artist, the idea of his works changing hands is never a restful one.



CHAPTER II

SIENNA, PERUGIA, AND VESUVIUS

A TWO days' excursion to Sienna at the close of our second vintage at Caravaggio was a fit *finale* to the last visit you and I ever paid to Italy *en garçon*.

From Tuscany to Etruria—deeper still into the luxury of associating with the past. Honey-coloured Sienna! It dwells in my memory bathed in sunshine; the little city like a golden cup overflowing with the riches it can scarcely hold; the home of St. Catherine and the scene of her ecstasies and superhuman endeavours: the battlefield of St. Bernardine's manful struggle against vice and luxury and gambling, so rampant and unabashed in his time. Everywhere in this city you see, sculptured on circular plaques of old white marble, let into the walls in street and square, that monogram which all denominations of Christians know so well, the I.H.S. with the Cross—*Jesus Hominum Salvator*. Whether the engraved characters seen on the tombs in the Roman Catacombs were or were not identical with those three initials and their significance, they were so regarded by all the Churches for centuries, and the monogram which St. Bernardine caused to be set up in this way throughout Sienna was moulded on them in that belief. It was he who caused this emblem to be so placed that the reluctant public eye could not wholly avoid it, and who had it illuminated on tablets which he held up to his congregations at the end of his rousing sermons, thus making that appeal to the mind through the eye which he relied upon as one of his most effectual levers. One may say he morally forced the people to recognise and venerate that Name once more.

Upon the carved coats-of-arms of Guelph and Ghibelline, which seemed to gird at each other from the walls, he imposed this sign of peace, and hence the multiplicity of these lovely symbols I am trying to recall. They are seals which his strong hand stamped upon his native place.



PLOUGHING IN TUSCANY

Like all the great saints, Bernardine was practical. The manufacturers of playing-cards and dice, finding their customers leaving them in ever-increasing numbers to follow the Franciscan with a fervour which reached to extraordinary heights, brought their complaints to him. Bankruptcy was upon them. "Turn your talent to painting this Name on cards and sell them to the people." This was done, and these little tablets with the "I.H.S." became endowed with a peculiar sanctity to the purchasers and sold well, so that little fortunes flowed in to fill the void left by the fall in playing-cards. All these we spoke of on the spot, I remember, and I write these words to you who know it all better than I do, to show you I have not forgotten.

Sometimes the monogram is inserted in the marble discs in gold on a blue ground. Do you see again those circles of warm white marble, those shining letters surrounded with golden rays on the blue centre, the reflected light in the hollows of the carving, the Italian sky above? These Siennese blank walls are better employed than those of modern Rome, where we may see somebody's soap or blacking belauded in our mother tongue *ad nauseam*.

"A city set on a hill cannot be hid." How high Sienna is set! A lovelier bit of man's workmanship was never held aloft for man to see.

"To appreciate the outside aspect of Sienna we drove out" (I see in my diary) "to the fortress-villa of Belcaro, with an introduction to the owner, a recluse, who, though he has been to London once, somewhere in the 'forties, has never been to Sienna.

"The drive to this historic villa was through a perfect Pre-Raphaelite landscape, full of highly-cultivated hillocks, above which the grander distant country unfolded itself. I apologized to the old Masters for what I had said of their landscape backgrounds before I had seen the Siennese middle distances whose type seems to have inspired so many of them.

"Each turn in the road gave us a new aspect of the golden-brown city behind us, on its steep hill. Perhaps the most effective view of it is from near Belcaro, where you get the dark stone-pines in the immediate foreground.

"And the interior of the city! Those narrow streets they call here *rughe* and *costarelle* are fascinating, dipping down to some archway through which you see, far below, the sudden misty distance of the rolling campagna, or a peep of a piazza in dazzling sunlight contrasting with the semi-darkness of the narrow stone lane. So narrow are these lanes that a pair of oxen drawing a cart all but scrape the side walls with the points of their enormous horns, and you must manage to avoid a collision by obliterating yourself in the nearest doorway. We found the people beautiful. There are no modern abominations in the way of buildings here, so that one enjoys Sienna with unalloyed pleasure." ... At last!

I suppose nothing could be more satisfying to the lover of beauty and of that dignity which belongs to the great works of architecture of the past than the aspect of Sienna Cathedral in the light of a September moon, the planets and stars watching with her over that sanctuary in the cloudless heavens.

The silence of a little Italian city like this at night, when the full moon dispenses with the artificial lighting, is always taking. To-night the urban silence is broken perhaps by a burst of singing and the thrumming of a guitar; young fellows with apparently plenty of leisure are coming jauntily along the pavement singing, "*Oi! Oi! Oi! Tirami la gamba se tu puoi,*" and suddenly dive down a pitch-dark alley; then a burst of laughter from a cavernous wine-shop; then stillness again. A dog barks in a garden over whose walls you see where the "blessed moon tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops." A fountain bubbles and gushes softly as you come upon its hiding-place in the deep shadow from a bit of loopholed wall that you scarcely recognize as the one you were sketching this morning. Hither a few fire-flies, remnants of the summer host, have strayed from beyond the city ramparts. Footsteps echo in the silence more than in the day-time; not a wheel is heard, but the campagna below is heard. It is murmuring with its invisible life of insects all awake and full of shrill energy—goodness knows about what. Your own energy is ebbing after the day's enchantment and you feel that to stroll and sit and look is all the bliss you need.

I had a revelation at Sienna about frescoes. In this extraordinarily dry atmosphere you can see, as nowhere else, the fresco as it was originally intended to appear. I do not know that I liked the effect as I came into the sacristy of the cathedral and saw Pinturicchio's apparently freshly painted scenes. These were so true, not only in their linear, but (strange to say) in their aërial, perspective that the effect was as if the walls had opened to show us these crowds of figures in gorgeous halls or airy landscapes *outside* the building, and the eye was deceived by a positive illusion. One wants to *feel* the walls of an apartment, and when its frescoes are flat and faded, and appearing more as lovely bits of decorative colour, as we see elsewhere, the eye is better satisfied. But, looked at as pictures, these richly coloured works are truly masterly, full of character and natural, realistic action.

Much of the beauty of the Middle Ages which we delight in is owing to the mellowing of Time. When first turned out by painter or mason this beauty would not so charm the artist. A brandnew feudal castle must have looked very hard and staring; a walled city like a Brobdingnagian toy town in a round box. No lichens on those walls; no ivy, no clumps of wallflowers, or any of those compassionate veils that Nature, if allowed a free hand, gently lays upon our crudities, and which the modern Italian *Sindaco* calls "*indecenza*" and commands to be scraped away. The mind recognises the rightness of the inevitable bare look of a new building, but a scraped ruin offends both mind and eye.

PERUGIA

ONE day in April '99 I was reading a fascinating little book by Miss Duff Gordon on Perugia as I sat on a fallen pine-tree trunk in our wood at Rosebank in remote Cape Colony. I read it with intenser longing than ever to be back in the world of art, of history, of culture, of well-known and well-loved things, and, thinking we were likely to be in our lovely exile for at least three years (with a short flight home to England in the interval, perhaps), I thought of several precious things I would give to be at Perugia in reality. That very day in that very month of the following year I was there!

Why do we fret about the future? Vain weakness! In my experience the future has brought more than I wished for and better things, and the sad things that have come have been those I had not feared.

It is a lovely journey from Florence to Perugia—all beautiful, and one wants to be at both ends of the railway carriage at once so as to miss nothing. The old brown cities along the route are as frequent as the Rhine castles; they still have their battlemented walls and gateways to delight the artist for a long while yet. Perugia did not frown upon us so mediævally this time, as we drove up the long zigzag to it, as when you and I first saw it. I think some of the frown has been demolished since those days, and indeed I do not regret this. They are raising some good public buildings where, I am told, the old castle stood, and in these you see lovely pillars of rosy marble or granite quarried from Assisi. That old castle had gloomy memories for the Italians and had no claim to stay.

Like all Italian cities, Perugia has a strongly marked character of its own. This local character of her cities is one of Italy's richest possessions. Genoa, brilliant in white, salmon-pink, and buff, the colouring of her palaces, and scintillating in the sun as it beats upon her pearl-grey roofs; Florence, sombre with the brown of her local *pietra serena* and roofed with the richer brown of her Tuscan tiles; Verona, regal and stately, throned on the foothills of the Alps, her rich colouring focussed in the red and tawny curtains which the Veronese hang before their church doors; Padua, shady with trees, sedate and academic, on the level, and uniform in tone, a city of arcades; Perugia, a mountain fortress of brown bricks, her austerity mellowed by the centuries—what a series they make! How carefully the "Young Nation" should deal with these precious things that have all come into her hands! Almost every great city in this land was once a capital. If only the Italians would build as they used to I should rejoice in seeing lovely things rising new and strong in the place of decay and thus giving promise of a new lease of architectural beauty for Italy. But the pity of it is that most of the new things are characterless and dreary. Every cultivated Italian deploras the fact and one wonders who the Goths in authority are that have the doing of these things.

To you and me there are certain conjunctions of words that carry a swift sense of delight to the mind. Amongst these none are more appealing than "the Umbrian Hills." Here in Perugia we are seated amongst them, and when I saw them again on that magic April day it was towards evening, and in despairing haste I made the best sketch I could on arriving, from the hotel window, to try and record those soft sunset tones on the Perugino landscape. When next morning we were being shown the treasures in the church of San Pietro, and I was particularly directed to examine the lovely paintings on the shutters of the sacristy windows, I found it hard to look at the shutters of windows that opened upon such a prospect, where lay Assisi on the slopes of the "Umbrian Hills"!



THE BERSAGLIERI AT THE FOUNTAIN, PERUGIA

In the Uffizi, in the Vatican Galleries, it is the same—one eye roving out of the open windows at the reality that is there! A Lung' Arno with Bello Sguardo calling to you over the pink almond blossoms on its slopes; a dome of St. Peter's, silky in its grey sunlit sheen against the Roman sky—too much, to have such things outside the gallery windows, distracting you from your studies within. But, of course, it is the right setting, and if you feel it gives you

too much, call to mind the prospect outside one of the British Museum windows. That, certainly, will never inconvenience you with distractions; so be thankful for the "too much."

A BIT OF DIARY

"23rd April 1900.—All day 'on the wander' through ripe old Perugia. A silent city, full of memories, brimming over with history, lapped in Art! Everywhere the flowering fruit-trees showed over the brown walls, the sunshine fell pleasantly on the masses of old unfinished brickwork and lent them a charm which on a wet day must vanish and leave them in a grim severity. Quiet tone everywhere; no ornament in the Roman sense, but here and there exquisite bits of carving and detail such as one can only find in the flat-surfaced Italian Gothic which is here seen in its very home. How that flat surface of blank wall spaces and the horizontal tendency of the design suit the Italian light. Architecture may well be placed as the most important of the Arts. It adds, if beautiful, to nature's beauty, showing the height to which the human hand may dare to rise so as to join hands with the Divine Architect Himself. How it can disgrace His work we have only too many opportunities of judging!

"We visited my well-loved church of San Pietro, that treasure-house left undespoiled by the Italian Government—safeguarded, *not* as a place of worship—let that be well understood—but as 'an Art Monument.' So its pictures and carvings are left in the places their authors intended them for and not nailed up stark and shivering in a cold, staring museum, like the poor altar pieces and modest bits of delicate carving that have been wrenched from their life-long homes in so many churches throughout this country. True, in the museum the light is good, far better for showing the artist's work than the 'dim religious light' of a church. But the painter knew all about the bad light, and still painted his picture for such and such an altar, not to his own glory, but to the glory of God.

"As we were passing once more the rich-toned Duomo and Nicola Pisano's lovely fountain that stands before it, we saw the fountain suddenly surrounded by an eruption of Bersaglieri, who woke the echoes of that erst-while silent Piazza with their songs and chaff. They were on manoeuvres and were halting here for the day. Shedding heavy hats and knapsacks, they had run down to fill their canteens and water-barrels. *Toujours gais* are the Bersaglieri, and a very pretty sight it was to see those good-looking healthy lads in their red fatigue fezes unbending in this picturesque manner. In the evening they were off again with the fanfaronade of their massed trumpets spurring their *pas gymnastique* to the farthest point of swagger, and Perugia returned to its repose.

"We strolled about the streets by the light of the moon and *felt* the silence of those narrow ways. Now a cat would run into the light and disappear into blackness; a man in a cloak would emerge from a dark alley, as it were at the back of a stage, and, coming forward into the moonlight of an open space, look ready to begin a tenor love-song to an overhanging balcony (the lady not yet to the fore)—the opening scene in an opera after the overture of the Bersaglieri trumpets. Assuredly this was old Italy. The one modern touch is a very lovely one. In place of the old and rank olive-oil lamps of my first visit, burning at street corners under the little holy images and in the recesses of the wine-shops, there are drops of exquisite electric light. Thank goodness, the hideous interval of gas is nearing its extinction in Italy and the blessed 'white coal' which this country can generate so cheaply by her abundant water-power, will e'er very long become the agent of her machine-driven industries and illuminate with soft radiance her gracious cities. I think the Via Nuova at Genoa, that street of palaces, glowing in the light of those great electric globes, swung across from side to side, is a quite splendid bit of modernity, for which I tender the Genoese my hearty thanks. '*Grazie, Signori!*'"

VESUVIUS

COMMEND me to a darkening winter afternoon amidst the fires of Vesuvius for bringing the mind down to first principles! This is what we poetise, and paint, and dance on—this Thing that we are come to gaze at here in silence, as it shows through certain cracks in this shell we call the solid earth! "You are here on sufferance," the Thing says to us, "and you do well to come and see where I show a little bit of myself. May it do you good. Remember, I am under your feet wherever you go!"

Jan. '96—"To-day the fumes from the nether fires came in gusts through the snorting crater, sending sulphurous smoke rolling down on the keen north wind straight into our labouring lungs as we pounded through the ashes on our way up the 'cone.' There is no getting at all near the hideous mouth; in attempting any such thing one would very soon be over head and ears in the yellow sulphur and lost beyond recall. I thought of the fate of a 'mad Englishman,' who, in spite of the warning cries of the native guides, made a dart for some outlying lesser crater, declaring he saw a shoe floating in it. Trying to hook out this precious 'shoe' with his walking-stick, he fell in and withered away like a moth in a candle-flame.

"I was cheered on to fresh exertions by W.'s encouraging words, otherwise I think I would have reposed by the wayside at an early stage of the ascent, yet too proud for a litter. Many of the party went up in litters ignominiously carried on men's shoulders, but I went through the whole routine on foot, as I began; only I was inclined to halt at retardingly frequent intervals. The growls of the mountain every now and then warned us that a volley of rocks and stones was coming, and, behold! the bunch of them shot up in a wide arc over our heads. The crater is a spectacle that gives the mind such occupation as it has not had before. Talk of the Pyramids and the Sphinx that so overpowered me at Gizeh! That crater would think it a good joke to chuck them up in the air.

"But nothing impressed me into silence so heavily as the sight, later on, of a lava stream, lower down the mountain-side, issuing in thick ooze, and crawling slowly from out a gaping cavern. Liquid, deep scarlet fire was this, of the density, apparently, of oil, advancing like a fiery death to scorch and consume with slow and even flow—inexorable. No possibility of approaching its borders; even where we stood the rocks began to burn our feet. A guide flung a log of wood on the river, and it spontaneously burst into vivid flame, shrivelled up, and was gone in a puff of smoke. Turning for rest and solace from the lurid spectacle, the factitious horrors of the congealed lava all around one only deepened the sense of gloom. Curling and curdling as they cooled, the lava streams of bygone times have hardened into the most weird shapes the imagination could conceive. We seemed to be on a battlefield where Titan warriors lay distorted in their death agony; enormous mothers clasped their babies in the embrace of death, and the war-horses were monsters of pre-historic stature, petrified in the last throes.

"We could see far, far down on the plain the skeleton of poor little Pompeii like a minute raised plan delicately

modelled in plaster.

“The thunders of the Bible will reverberate in my mind with more vitality since our excursion to Vesuvius.”

I found balm in Capri, Amalfi, and all the supreme lovelinesses of the Neapolitan Riviera to soothe the blisters of the volcano; and if I had trembled at the thunders of the Bible I was reassured by its blessings, which seemed embodied in those scenes of Eden.



CHAPTER III

ROME

ROME! I am almost inclined to leave out this central fact, although I never kept a fuller diary than I did during those seven months of my student life there that followed Florence. How can I approach it and say anything but platitudes on the subject? Every one has tried his or her hand upon this theme, and many dreadful banalities have come of it; many pert assertions, ignorant statements, sentimentalities. Rome has always impressed me as being the centre of the world—not as the Ancient Romans boasted when they set up their Golden Milestone, but in a higher sense; and to the artist her atmosphere is known to be exhilarating, some say “intoxicating.” We all feel that physical delight in being there, whatever views we may entertain in a spiritual sense. Who was the writer who said that every morning on waking she said to herself, “I am in Rome!” I believe many tacitly, at least, like to register that fact at each awakening to another Roman day.



A MEETING ON THE PINCIAN: FRENCH AND GERMAN SEMINARISTS

You and I have of late years seen *l'Eterna* much changed in her physical aspect, and have grieved over the fact; yet it is only another of her many phases that is slowly developing before our eyes. At the earliest period of which we know enough to imagine her aspect she was colonnaded, porticoed and white; and the horrible time of her luxurious decadence saw very much the same huge tenement “sky-scrappers” run up as we are weeping over to-day. These jerry-buildings tumbled down occasionally just as they are doing now. Then I see Rome in the Middle Ages a city of square fortified towers—where are they all? Then comes the florid period when the dome was dominant as we see it in our time, and much exuberant bad taste dressed her out fantastically. Now some very dreadful things in the way of monster houses and wide, straight, shadeless streets are being committed; but they, too, will pass; but Rome will remain. Eternal as to the soul the city is ever changing as to the body. How ugly she must have been when rebuilt in a year after one of her burnings. There was jerry-building if you like! How awful after her sack by the Constable of Bourbon when “there was silence in her streets for three days”! I remember, when I used to look down on the city from a height in my very early days, wondering whether I had not been instructed too much in Roman history to enjoy that view to the extent I should have wished, as an art student, to do. So much cruelty and suffering had been concentrated in that little space I saw below me. But the joy of the eye soon banishes for me the sorrow of the mind, and there is joy enough for the eye in Rome!

Although I have revisited the well-loved city several times since those early days, the first visit stands out so much more fully coloured and intense in local sentiment than the subsequent ones, which seem almost insipid by comparison. You and I then saw her as she can never be seen again; we were just in time to know her under the old Papal régime, and we left three months before the Italians came in and began to rob her of her unique character. I cannot be too thankful that we have *that* put safely away in the treasury of our memories. We saw the Roman

citizens kneeling in masses along the streets as the Pope's mounted *Chasseur*, in cocked hats and feathers, heralded the approach of Pio Nono's ponderous coach, in which His Holiness was taking his afternoon airing. We saw the stately cardinals and bishops in their daily stroll on the Pincian, receiving the salutes of soldiers and civilians. There were such constant salutations everywhere, all day long, and such punctilious acknowledgments from the ecclesiastics that on closing my eyes at night I always saw shovel hats rising and sinking like flocks of crows hovering over a harvest-field.

We saw the sentries on Good Friday mounting guard with arms reversed and all the flags that day flying at half-mast: the Colosseum was in those days treated as consecrated ground; more as the scene of Christian martyrdoms than as a Pagan antiquity. There stood the stations of the Cross, and there a friar preached every Wednesday during Lent. That fearsome ruin was then warmly lined with rich flora and various lusty trees and shrubs that have all been scraped and scoured away in harmony with the spirit of modern Italy.

What luck it was for us to be in Rome that wonderful year of 1870, when the Œcumenical Council filled her streets and churches with every type of episcopal ecclesiastic from the four quarters of the globe, each accompanied by his "theologian" and by secretaries in every variety of dress, from the modern American to the pig-tailed Chinaman. Great times for the art student, with all these types and colours as subjects for his pencil! The characteristics and the colour of Rome were thus multiplied and elaborated to the utmost possible point, up to the very verge of the Great Cleavage; and we saw it all.



A LENTEN SERMON IN THE COLOSSEUM

The open-air incidents connected with the great Church functions have left an extraordinarily vivid impression on my mind on account of their eminently pictorial qualities. I see again the archaic "glass coaches" of Pope and cardinals, high-swung and seeming to bubble over with gilding, rumbling slowly up to the Church door where the ceremony is to take place, over the cobblestones, behind teams of fat black steeds, the leaders' scarlet traces sweeping the ground. The occupants of these wonderful vehicles are glowing like rubies in their ardent robes, which flood their faces with red reflections in the searching sunshine. A prelate in exquisite lilac, mounted on a white mule with black housings, bears a jewelled cross, sparkling in the sun, before the Pope's carriage; the postilions, coachmen, and lackeys are eighteenth-century figures come to life again, and, truth to tell, they might have brought their liveries over with them, furbished up for the occasion. Not much public money seems appropriated for new liveries in the Papal household, nor in that of the College of Cardinals. Then, the medley of modern soldiers that take part officially and unofficially in these scenes—the off-duty zouaves, with bare necks outstretched, cheering frantically, "Long live the Pope-King," in many languages; the French Legion inclined to criticise the old liveries—it all seems to me like the happening of yesterday! And I see the rain of flowers falling on the kindly old Pope from the spectators in the balconies, where rich draperies give harmonious backgrounds to all this colour.

Times are changed at home as well as in Rome. Where are the gorgeous equipages I used to wonder at as a child on drawing-room days, that made St. James' Street a scene of gold and colour of surpassing richness? Where are the bewigged coachmen stiff with bullion, throned on the resplendent hammercloths of their boxes? Where the six-foot footmen hanging on in bunches behind, in liveries pushed to the utmost limit of extravagant finery? We only see these things on exceptional occasions (certainly the six-footers are not grown nowadays), and the quiet landau or motor harmonises better with our modern taste.

Finally, we saw the last Papal Benediction to be given from the façade of St. Peter's on that memorable Easter Sunday, 1870. The scene was made especially notable in its pictorial effect by the masses of bishops, all in snow-white copes and mitres, who completely filled the terrace above the colonnade on the Vatican side of the Piazza. What a symphony of white they made up there, partly in the luminous shadow of the long awning, partly in the blazing sunshine. Some of the illuminated ones used their mitres as parasols. Such a huge *parterre* of prelates had never been beheld before. It was a *parterre* of human lilies. My diary exclaims, "Oh! for Leighton's genius to paint it. It was entirely in his style—composition, colour, and sentiment. The balustrade was hung with mellow, old, faded tapestry, and above the bishops' heads rose those dark old stone statues that tell so well against the sky." I remember the moment of intense silence that fell on the multitude a little before Pio Nono, wearing the Triple Crown, stood up and, in a loud voice, gave forth "to the city and to the world" the mighty words of blessing from the little balcony far up aloft. And I remember, too, how that sudden silence seemed to cause a strange uneasiness

amongst the cavalry and artillery horses, which all began to neigh.

On this great day the white and yellow flag, emblem of the Temporal Power, waved upon the light spring breeze wherever one turned. How little we dreamt that in a few months that flag was to be hauled down, drawn under by the fall of the greatest military Empire then in existence!

As a postscript, do not let us forget the races of the riderless horses that took place at the end of Carnival. Those scenes are before me now, quite fresh, revived by the little old diary. I am glad I have still my sketch-books that give me the outlines of these and other scenes that are gone for ever from the world.

There is the wide round Piazza del Popolo, like an amphitheatre; the sun, near its setting, is tinging the upper portion of the great Egyptian obelisk, which is the starting-post for the occasion, with crimson, the base remaining in cool grey shade. Much stamping of hoofs and champing of bits in the ranks of the Dragoons, who are preparing to clear the Corso; French infantry forming up on either side of the starting-place; the crowds in the stands expectant, many units in carnival costume, and masked. Away go the Dragoons, splitting the crowd that blocks the entrance to the darkening, narrow Corso. They return at a gallop, having ridden to the end and back, and divide to take up their positions. Then the barbs, painted in spots and stripes, are brought on gingerly. The least jerk and it's no use trying to form a line; they must be let go; the spiked balls, now unfastened and dangling, are beginning to prick in spite of all the care. One after the other the maddened creatures plunge and tug at the restraining grip of the convicts who act as grooms on this occasion, and who literally hold their lives in their hands,—it all passes in a quarter of a minute; down goes the rope, a gun is fired, shouts and clapping of hands ring through the chilly air, and the eleven furious horses plunge into the dark street, the squibs and tin-foil on their backs explode and crackle, the spiked balls bang against their sides. spurts of sparks fly from their iron heels brightly in the twilight. One horse, perhaps, slips on the cobblestones, rolls over, picks himself up, and follows the others, straining every nerve. They are gone—engulfed in the dark passage, some to be recovered only after several days, wandering in the Campagna, having burst through the sheet spread to stop them at the finish.



THE START FOR THE HORSE RACE, ROME

I often wondered which ordeal a horse would prefer, if he were given the choice—this one, for a mile, or that of a great English race, with a jockey on his back with thousands of pounds to win or lose, armed with a steel whip and a pair of severe spurs! I never wholly enjoy a horse-race in any shape because of these goads in various forms.

Anyhow, I am glad these Roman races have been abolished.

I felt greatly elated when setting up work on my own account, which I did very soon after my arrival from Florence and Bellucci. He had told me at parting that I could “walk by myself” now, and I very soon walked up the steps of the Trinità to choose my first model. You remember how those costumed loafers used to sun themselves on the steps at that time? I had a half-frightened, half-delighted thrill when choosing my first *Ciocciaro*. It was the Judgment of Paris transposed. Three of them, in peaked hats and goatskins, stood grinning and posing before the English *signorina* while the Papal zouave sentry and the whole lot of male and female models looked on and listened. When I gave the apple to Antonio on account of his good brown face and read waistcoat, and engaged him for the morrow, I felt I had started.

What trouble mamma and I had had in trying to find a studio. A young lady working by herself! A thing unknown—no one would let me a studio, so we ended with the makeshift you remember in our apartment. “That comes of being a woman at starting,” exclaimed mamma.

I can never pass No. 56 Via Babuino without pausing and looking up at one of the top windows where my head hung out one morning, watching my model in the street below for half an hour and wondering how long he meant to saunter up and down with his eye on the Church clock opposite instead of coming up. I had engaged him for eight o'clock for an eight-hour day (*giornata finita*), and there he was, strolling away a franc's worth of sitting on purpose. “But, Signorina, one cannot always arrive to the very instant,” was the villain's excuse on coming in. I said nothing of what I had seen out of the window. Dear old Francesco, he was much prized for his laugh, which he could keep up for twenty minutes at a time. I had already seen it in a picture in London. Of course I had a try, too, and it brought me luck, for the picture where it appears was the first Oil I sold.

Let me remind you of the Pope's International Exhibition of Ecclesiastical Art held that winter, for which I painted “The Visitation.” The Fine Art section was shown in the Cloisters of Sa. Maria degli Angeli in the Baths of Diocletian. I laugh even now when I recall the way in which my poor picture was launched into the world. After its acceptance by the committee, I had to get a pass for its admission into the exhibition building from the Minister of

Commerce, the Most Eminent and Most Reverend Cardinal B. Mamma and I had to wait an age in his ante-room, conscious of being objects of extraordinary curiosity to the crowd of men artists who were there on the same errand as myself. Evidently artists of our sex were rarities in Italy. At last our turn came to go in, and, after many formalities and much polite bowing from l'*Eminentissimo* and *riverendissimo*, I signed the several papers, and proudly followed my mamma back through the waiting artists, holding my roll of papers before me. We were informed that, being women, we could not take the picture ourselves into the Cloisters, as no order had been given to admit ladies into the monastic precincts before the opening. So our dear father sallied forth on foot with my pass to Sa. Maria, mamma and I following in a little hired Victoria, holding the big picture before us (no mean handful) to keep it from tumbling out, while hidden, ourselves, from the public eye by the carriage hood. We arrived at the entrance to the forbidden cloisters too soon, as papa had not arrived, and the gendarmes stopped us and told us to drive out of the court again. We pulled up, therefore, on the threshold, with our faces turned in the contrary direction, when the horrible hood flew back and revealed us, holding on to the picture with straining arms and knitted brows, to the grinning soldiers gathered about the place. Our dear father and Mr. Severn (Keats' friend in youth) soon came to the rescue, and, with the aid of two *facchini*, they took my *magnum opus* and disappeared with it into the gloom of the *Thermæ*.

Dear, kind old Mr. Severn, he seemed so pleased to help me in my initial struggles in Rome! When I next visited Keats' grave there, long years afterwards with W., I found another tombstone alongside of the Poet's. There was a palette sculptured on it in place of the other one's lyre, and one little box hedge held the two friends within its embrace. What made Oliver Wendell Holmes (if it was he) say the scent of box was the scent of Eternity? I do not know the context of the passage, but I think the idea might strike a sensitive perception in some Italian cemetery, where that most touching perfume is always on the air, and Eternity plays about our minds on the scent of the box.

.....

From the Diary

Feb. 1906.—“And now Good-bye, Rome! I hope not a final farewell. I have been up to the Villa Medici to see across the city, on this my last evening, that dome which no one can ever look at unmoved, just at the hour which at this time of year brings the setting sun behind it, so that the crimson central ray seems to spring from the cross on the summit. Shutting out with my hand all intervening objects I seemed to see that purple dome floating in mid-air, a link between earth and heaven; a living token of the intercourse between the two, poised far above the dead ruins of the Pagan Past that lay low, in shadow, to the eastward. Good-bye.”

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THE END

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This typographical error has been corrected by the etext transcriber:
hear noctural frogs=> hear nocturnal frogs {pg 108}

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