

main roads, despite their lack of humour, and they were just as bad. All the roads of the department which we had invaded were criminal—as criminal as anything in industrial Yorkshire. A person who had travelled only on the roads of the Loire would certainly say that French roads were the worst in Europe. This shows the folly of generalising. We held an inquisition as to these roads when we halted for lunch.

"What would you?" replied the landlady. "It is like that!" She was a stoic philosopher. She said the state of the roads was due to the heavy loads of beetroot that pass over them, the beetroot being used for sugar. This seemed to us a feeble excuse. She also said we should find that the roads got worse. She then proved that in addition to being a great philosopher she was a great tactician. We implored lunch, and it was only 11:15. She said, with the most charming politeness, that her regular clients—*ces messieurs*—arrived at twelve, and not before, but that as we were "pressed" she would prepare us a special lunch (founded on an omelette) instantly. Meanwhile we could inspect her fowls, rabbits and guinea-pigs. Well, we inspected her fowls, rabbits and guinea-pigs till exactly five minutes past twelve, when *ces messieurs* began to arrive. The adorable creature had never had the least intention of serving us with a special lunch. Her one desire was not to hurt our sensitive, high-strung natures. The lunch consisted of mackerel, ham, cutlets, *fromage à la crème*, fruits and wine. I have been eating at