

example of ostentation, of an end aimed at and achieved, it will pass muster. And, lost in one of those profound meditations upon life and death and luxury which even the worst novelists must from time to time indulge in, I forgot everything save the idea of the significance of the train rushing, so complete and so self-contained, through unknown and uncared-for darkness. For me the train might have been whizzing at large through the world as the earth whizzes at large through space. Then that African came along and asserted with frigid politeness that dinner was ready.

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And in the highly-decorated dining-car, where vines grew all up the walls, and the table-lamps were electric bulbs enshrined in the metallic curves of the *art nouveau*, and the fine cut flowers had probably been brought up from Grasse that morning, it happened that the African himself handed me the menu and waited on me. And when he arrived balancing the elaborate silver "contraption" containing ninety-nine varieties of *hors-d'œuvres*, but not the particular variety I wanted, I determined that I would enter the lists with him. And, catching his eye, I said with frigid politeness: *N'y a-t-il pas de sardines?*

He restrained himself for his usual five seconds, and then he replied, with a politeness compared to which mine was sultry:

"Non, monsieur."

And he went on to say (without speaking, but with his eyes, arms, legs, forehead, and spinal col-