

To Venice

a near, unsubtle presence, and lifting my heavy eyelids with an effort, I made out through the dimness the indistinct shape of Taft in a dressing gown. "Hullo, what's up?" I asked, drowsily. "Just going to mail these postals of Spalato—they'll think I've been here then," he replied. Quaint is American nature.

The Expedition was drawing to a close now, for Taft's holiday was nearly over and I was wearying of trains and cabins and my two khaki shirts.

The next night was a glorious one. We sat long on the deck with the great palpitating heart of the sea about us and the homeless night wind sighing sadly through the cordage. For the first time during our acquaintance Taft unexpectedly evinced an unwonted interest in my affairs and future. From his conversations in the past weeks, I had gathered the general impression that Americans have the poorest opinion of our intelligence; and they believe—because we do not think our own little affairs of enough interest to talk about to strangers, and because we do not ordinarily say quite all that is in our hearts—they believe us hopelessly dull and destitute of ideas. But as the recipient of these terrible revelations, I not unnaturally flattered myself that I was deemed an exception