

has probably the merit of being undiluted, they must be harder to please than we were. And when I add that on the table stood a kind of Portland Vase of mustard, so tall and capacious that one naturally turned up one's sleeve and took a gravy-spoon in hand for the purpose of exploring its recesses, it must be obvious to the inductive mind that Cortina is a land of plenty.

There is scope enough on the peaks about Cortina for the expertest mountaineer to prove his cragmanship, and for anybody to break his neck sensationally. There is ample choice of rambles afoot, and *Pieve di Cadore*, where Titian was born, and, living amongst the Dolomites, grew into the habit of putting their weird shapes upon his canvases, lies within a day's pilgrimage. But the real centre and heart of the district, the most captivating and characteristic natural surroundings, must be looked for at *Caprile*, six hours' good walking to the south-west.

To *Caprile*, though, one cannot very conveniently take baggage, except to the extent of a knapsack; so before leaving Cortina it is necessary to make some sort of arrangement for sending on, in hope of some day finding it again, any reserve of clothing that one may happen to be blessed (or plagued) with. In our case Venice seemed likely to be the next place where we should think of collars and razors; so it was arranged that the afternoon before our start for *Caprile* I should take a single-horse trip to the Italian frontier, see the three little portmanteaus of the party safely through the custom-house there, and book them on to our intended hotel on the Grand Canal. My comrades, J— and C—, gave me, of course, each his key, that I might be able to open all or any of the 'pieces' on demand, and with an honesty that I am bold to brag of (for I had nothing personally to gain or lose by it) it had been agreed that I was to own J—'s

portmanteau containing some tobacco, and take the consequences of duty or its forfeiture. Away we bowled down the white road in the westerling sun, Antelao in front, pitched like a Titan's bell-tent to guard the way, and my driver volubly treating me to Germano-Italian sandwiches of chatter, the predominant burden being—not the marvellous mountains, not any of the things or habits noteworthy or interesting in the *Ampezzo Thal*, but—the hardness of his own individual life, and his certain conviction that every Englishman was 'full of gold.' Hardly past the bilingual notice-boards that mark the frontier, a dusty-coated official of the baser sort stalking athwart the road magnificently bids us halt. 'The Dogana?' 'No, signor—the Fumigator.' 'The Fumigator?' Why, what on earth—?' but before I can get my sentence finished (in Italian) the dusty-coated one, with the connivance of my driver, has whipped off all the baggage into a whitewashed building by the roadside; which has the no-doubt-intended effect of making me descend and follow suit. As soon as Dusty-coat has got us all into his den he proceeds to lock the door, and then, going to a brazier in the corner, stirs into vaporous life a panful of some abominable chemicals; after which he finds time and complaisance to vouchsafe me the information that this is the Italian government's device for keeping cholera out—now that it is fairly in—and that, in fine, he would like to have the pleasure of drinking my health in return for his suffocating assault upon it. Well, to escape into fresh air again is cheap at a depreciated *lira* ransom; and a couple of hundred yards farther brings us to the custom-house at last. The receiver in person politely comes forward to conduct the examination of my portmanteaus. 'Anything to declare, signor?' 'Yes' (with a glow of conscious virtue in the avowal)—'some tobacco in that black portmanteau.' 'Hah! Open it.' I have