

of ideas it had suggested to me, which kept constantly bringing back at odd intervals to my mind the far-off Eastern island, the unvisited silent spot in it, the veined and grained masses of luxurious green and yellow.

Some weeks later I was at a country house in Yorkshire, where portraits, books, everything—even the screens and chintzes and bell-pulls—were redolent of the last century. It was Sunday; it was the sleepy hour that succeeds a Sunday luncheon; and my hostess, by way of imparting a little life to a guest, asked one of her daughters to show me a certain book—a picture-book, so I gathered, but I was unable to catch its name. Presently a folio, bound in faded russia, was deposited on a table and its thick leaves were being turned over for my benefit. I now realised that it was a French book of travels, dealing principally with the eastern shores of the Adriatic, dedicated to the First Consul, and illustrated with fine engravings. Many of these were of unexpected interest—for instance, several of Pola, and of Diocletian's palace at Spalatro; but there was one above all that at once arrested and fascinated me. It represented a castle, lying somewhere south-east of Trieste, of the most singular aspect, and in the most singular situation imaginable. It was perched on the spur of a mountain, with a river and woods below; and close behind it, gashed in a frowning precipice, was a monstrous cavern, out of which the river 'issued—a cavern whose mouth, full of un-