

off, lay like a petal of apple-blossom on it; or it might have been the shell on which Aphrodite stood when the winds drifted her over these very waters. Why natural objects suggest human emotion is a difficult question, probably with a complicated answer. But anyone who had cared to look long at that blue surface, drowsy under the touch of a breeze, which caressed it lightly at intervals, would have seen in it some suggestion of that hunger or aspiration, of which for man the 'Eternal Feminine' is at once the cause and the symbol. The coast was far below us, and I could not see it; but I felt that along it there ought to be snowy temples, with columns between whose marble the living waters sparkled, and with capitals where the shadows clung sharp to the carved acanthus leaves.

The mundane taste of a cigarette conjured me back from dreamland; but the Asian coast, when I came to reflect longer about it, recalled to me what I believe are facts, almost as strange as dreams. For the country behind, and under those great snow mountains that were opposite to me, is literally to this day a country of unexhausted mysteries. Wonderful cities of the superbest days of Rome still exist there, in the hearts of untrodden forests, of which some have been visited only by single travellers, some never visited at all, but only seen from a distance, whilst some are known of only by rumour and local legend. Even on routes which, comparatively speaking, are familiar, the unexpected