

amongst blankets for novels and pocket-handkerchiefs, and a great cramming and dragging about of bags. My own preparations made, I escaped outside to the balcony. I was presently conscious that our speed began to slacken; some houses gleamed ahead of us; we slid by some walls and watch towers; a moment more and we were out on a frosty platform, surrounded by porters and a babble of quick Italian. After a little confusion, and many illustrations of the belief that English is a universal language if only spoken loudly enough, passengers, porters, all in a straggling crowd, were hurrying over a ringing pavement down to the moon-lit pier. There, lying close to it, was a tall shadowy mass with masts and towering funnels—our steamer for Alexandria. We ascended its side. Its portholes were eyes of lamp-light, which showed the monster wakeful, although it appeared asleep.

I was soon pacing the deck, my luggage collected and disposed of, and was thinking over the journey which had just come to an end—a journey which, though taken weekly by some fifteen or twenty Englishmen, has rarely been taken through a Europe so swathed in one bitter winding-sheet, and which still dwelt in my mind as something spectral and bewildering.

On the steamer, however, there was nothing spectral at all; though certain reminiscences, not entirely commonplace, even now mix in my memory with that smell of the night's keen air. After the