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Florence

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4982

Dearest T,

Well I arrived, on Sat. night, after one of the most frightful journeys I have ever had. The only bright spot was the crossing which was perfect & the transit across Paris went off all right. But then as I had all the time been sure, the wretched Bussetti had given me a ticket which obliged me to change at Milan - not trains, mercifully, but compartments, which is bad enough. He also gave me a dinner ticket which did not junction, so I had to wait till I got to Florence

working out at about 9 P.M. All
this however was nothing. In the
middle of the night some coal flew
into my eye, causing severe agony.
I had to creep out & wake the conductor
who rendered first aid. He got some
of it out, but not all, & after about
2 hours another operation was
performed. This gave considerable
relief & when the eye was open
I felt nothing. Shutting it was acute
pain. As I had not slept all night,
I was constantly falling asleep &
waking up with a scream. In the
midst of these torments I had to make my
^{way} twice to, from the dining car for
breakfast & lunch, climbing over
luggage & wriggling past fat &

sweating dagos while blasts of wind crashed into my wounded eye. I half thought of getting out at Milan for medical attention but the complications seemed terrible, & by keeping my eye open I avoided pain & reasoned that the grit must be lodged in the eyelid & therefore was not dangerous. So at Milan I made a last Alpine journey to my new seat & when the train started for the last stretch I suddenly realised that the eye was clear!

Whether it had been washed away by the floods of tears I shed, or whether it had really been extracted by the conductor & the pain afterwards was a mere aftermath, I don't know - I suspect the former as the relief

was so sudden. Arrived at Florence
3/4 hour late - how ~~we~~ miss the Duce -
exhausted from lack of food & shocks
I reached the hotel semi-conscious
only to find I had the wrong bag,
of course the one with my things for
the night! I washed in my soap
powder, ate a hasty & excellent meal
& fell into bed where I slept like a
log. (The night bag has been recovered.)

This morning I found a perfect, hot
day. As usual this went to my head,
& I took an immense walk - actually
to the Cascine - where, to my horror no
food was to be obtained. Returned
by tram & have spent the rest of
the day talking & eating.

Farther impressions to follow - I
shall post this to-morrow.