One seemed a very noisy, busy one to me as we rattled by over the stones, and I was glad to turn off to the left at a sign-post pointing towards Göhren and get on to the deep, sandy, silent forest roads.

The forest, at first only pines and rather scrubby ones, stretches the whole way from Baabe to Göhren and grows more and more beautiful. We had to drive at a walking-pace because of the deep sand; but these sandy roads have the advantage of being so quiet that you can hear something besides the noise of wheels and hoofs. Not till we got to Göhren did we see the sea, but I heard it all the way, for outside the forest the breeze had freshened into a wind, and though we hardly felt it I could see it passing over the pine-tops and hear how they sighed. I suppose we must have been driving an hour among the pines before we got into a region of mixed forest — beeches and oaks and an undergrowth of whortleberries; and then tourists began to flutter among the trees, tourists with baskets searching for berries, so that it was certain Göhren could not be far off. We came quite suddenly upon its railway station, a small building alone in the woods, the terminus of the line whose other end is Putbus. Across the line were white dunes with young beeches bending in the wind, and beyond these dunes the sea roared. Beeches and dunes were in the full glow of the sunset. We, skirting the forest on the other side, were in deep shadow. The air was so fresh that it was almost cold. I stopped

August and got out and crossed the deserted line and climbed up the dunes, and oh the glorious sight on the other side — the glorious, dashing, roaring sea! What was pale Lauterbach compared to this? A mere lake, a crystal pool, a looking-glass, a place in which to lie by the side of still waters and dream over your own and heaven's reflection. But here one could not dream; here was life, vigorous, stinging, blustering life; and standing on the top of the dune holding my hat on with both hands, banged and battered by the salt wind, my clothes flapping and straining like a flag in a gale on a swaying flagstaff, the weight of a generation was blown off my shoulders, and I was seized by a craving as unsuitable as it was terrific to run and fetch a spade and a bucket, and dig and dig till it was too dark to dig any longer, and then go indoors tired and joyful and have periwinkles or shrimps for tea. And behold Gertrud, cold reminder of realities, beside me cloak in hand; and she told me it was chilly, and she put the cloak round my unresisting shoulders, and it was heavy with the weight of hours and custom; and the sun dropped at that moment behind the forest, and all the radiance and colour went out together. 'Thank you, Gertrud,' I said as she wrapped me up; but though I shivered I was not grateful.

It was certainly not the moment to loiter on dunes. The horses had done enough for one day, nearly half their work having been over heavy sand, and we still had to look for our night

quarters. Lauterbach had been empty; therefore, with the illuminating logic of women, I was sure Göhren would have plenty of room for us. It had not. The holidays had just begun, and the place swarmed with prudent families who had taken their rooms weeks before. Göhren is built on a very steep hill that drops straight down on to the sands. The hill is so steep that we got out, and August led or rather pulled the horses up it. Luckily the forest road we came by runs along the bottom of the hill, and when we came out of the trees and found ourselves without the least warning of stray houses or lamp-posts in the heart of Göhren, we had to climb up the road and not drive down it. Driving down it must be impossible, especially for horses which, like mine, never see a hill in their own home. When we had got safely to the top we left August and the horses to get their wind and set out to engage rooms in the hotel the guide-book says is the best. There is practically only that one street in Göhren, and it is lined with hotels and lodging-houses, and down at the bottom, between the over-arching trees, the leaden waves were dashing on the deserted sands. People were having supper. Whatever place we passed, at whatever hour during the entire tour, people were always having something. The hotel I had chosen was in a garden, and the windows evidently had lovely views over the green carpet of the level tree-tops. As I walked up to the door I pointed to the windows of the bedroom I thought must be the

nicest, and told Gertrud it was the one I should take. It was a cold evening, and the bath-guests were supping indoors. There was no hall-porter or any one else whom I could ask for what I wanted, so we had to go into the restaurant, where the whole strength of the establishment was apparently concentrated. The room was crowded, and misty with the fumes of suppers. All the children of Germany seemed to be gathered in this one spot, putting knives into their artless mouths even when it was only sauce they wanted to eat, and devouring their soup with a passionate enthusiasm. I explained my wishes, grown suddenly less ardent, rather falteringly to the nearest waiter. All the children of Germany lifted their heads out of their soup-plates to listen. The waiter referred me to the head waiter. Embarrassed, I repeated my wishes, cooled down to the point where they almost cease to be wishes, to this person, and all the children of Germany sat with their knives suspended in the air and their mouths open while I did it. The head waiter told me I could have the rooms on the 15th of August — it was then the 17th of July — at which date the holidays ended and the families went home. 'Oh, thank you, thank you; that will do beautifully!' I cried, only too grateful that the families had left no corner unoccupied into which I might have felt obliged, by the lateness of the hour, to force my shrinking limbs; and hurrying to the door I could hear how all the children of Germany's heads seemed to splash back again into their soup-plates.

But my pleasure at not being doomed to stay there was foolish, as I quickly perceived, for stay somewhere I must, and the guide-book was right when it said this was the best hotel. Outside in the windy street August and the horses were waiting patiently. The stars were coming out in the pale green of the sky over Göhren, but from the east the night was dragging up a great curtain of chill black cloud. For the best part of an hour Gertrud and I went from one hotel to another, from one lodging-house to another. The hotels all promised rooms if I would call again in four weeks' time. The lodging-houses only laughed at our request for a night's shelter; they said they never took in people who were not going to stay the entire season, and who did not bring their own bedding. Their own bedding! What a complication of burdens to lay on the back of the patient father of a family. Did a holiday-maker with a wife and, say, four children have to bring six sets of bedding with him? Six sets of Teutonic bedding, stuffed with feathers? Six pillows, six of those wedge-like things to put under pillows called *Kielkissen*, and six quilted coverlets with insides of eider-down if there was a position to keep up, and of wadding if public opinion could afford to be defied? Yet the lodging-houses were full; and that there were small children in them was evident from the frequency with which the sounds that accompany the act of correction floated out into the street.

We found a room at last in the gloomiest hotel in the place. Only one room, under the roof in a

kind of tower, with eight beds in it, and no space for anything else. August had no room at all, and slept with his horses in the stable. There was one small iron wash-stand, a thing of tiers with a basin at the top, a soap-dish beneath it, underneath that a water-bottle, and not an inch more space in which to put a sponge or a nail-brush. In the passage outside the door was a chest of drawers reserved for the use of the occupiers of this room. It was by the merest chance that we got even this, the arrival of the family who had taken it for six weeks having been delayed for a day or two. They were coming the very next day, eight of them, and were all going to spend six weeks in that one room. 'Which,' said the landlord, 'explains the presence of so many beds.'

'But it does not explain the presence of so many beds in one room,' I objected, gazing at them resentfully from the only corner where there were none.

'The *Herrschaften* are content,' he said shortly. 'They return every year.'

'And they are content, too, with only one of these?' I inquired, pointing to the extremely condensed wash-stand.

The landlord stared. 'There is the sea,' he said, not without impatience at being forced to state the obvious; and disliking, I suppose, the tone of my remarks, he hurried downstairs.

Now it is useless for me to describe Göhren for the benefit of possible travellers, because I am prejudiced. I was cold there, and hungry, and

tired, and I lived in a garret. To me it will always be a place where there is a penetrating wind, a steep hill, and an iron wash-stand in tiers. Some day when the distinct vision of these things is blurred, I will order the best rooms in the best hotel several months beforehand to be kept for me till I come, wait for fair, windless weather and the passing of the holidays, and then go once more to Göhren. The place itself is, I believe, beautiful. No place with so much sea and forest could help being beautiful. That evening the beauties were hidden; and I abruptly left the table beneath some shabby little chestnuts in front of the hotel where I was trying, in gloom and wind, not to notice the wetness of the table-napkin, the stains on the cloth, and the mark on the edge of the plates where an unspeakable waiter had put his thumb, and went out into the street. At a baker's I bought some rusks — dry things that show no marks — and continued down the hill to the sea. There is no cold with quite so forlorn a chill in it as a sudden interruption of July heats; and there is no place with quite so forlorn a feeling about it as deserted sands on a leaden evening. Was it only the evening before that I had sailed away from Vilm in glory and in joy, leaving the form of the abstruse but beautiful youth standing in such a golden radiance that it was as the form of an angel? Down among the dunes, where the grey ribbons of the sea-grass were violently fluttering and indigo clouds lay in an unbroken level over leaden waves, I sat and ate my rusks and was

wretched. My soul rebelled both at the wretchedness and at the rusks. Not for these had I come to Rügen. I looked at the waves and shuddered. I looked at the dunes and disliked them. I was haunted by the image of the eight beds waiting in my garret for me, and of certain portions of the wall from which the paper was torn — the summer before, probably, by one or more of the eight struggling in the first onslaughts of asphyxia — and had not been gummed on again. My thoughts drifted miserably into solemn channels, in the direction of what Carlyle calls the Immensities. I remembered how I was only a speck after all in uncomfortably limitless space, of no account whatever in the general scheme of things, but with a horrid private capacity for being often and easily hurt; and how specks have a trick of dying, which I in my turn would presently do, and a fresh speck, not nearly so nice, as I hoped and believed, would immediately start up and fill my vacancy, perhaps so exactly my vacancy that it would even wear my gloves and stockings. The last rusk, drier and drearier than any that had gone before, was being eaten by the time my thoughts emerged from the gloom that hangs about eternal verities to the desirable concreteness of gloves and stockings. What, I wondered, became of the gloves and stockings of the recently extinguished female speck? Its Gertrud would, I supposed, take possession of its dresses; but my Gertrud, for instance, could not wear my gloves, and I know believes only in those stockings she

has knitted herself. Still, she has nieces, and I believe aunts. She would send them all the things she could not use herself, which would not be nice of Gertrud. It would not matter, I supposed, but it would not be nice. She would be letting herself down to being a kind of ghoul. I started up with the feeling that I must go and remonstrate with her before it was too late; and there, struggling in the wind and deep sand towards me, her arms full of warm things and her face of anxious solicitude, was the good Gertrud herself. 'I have prepared the gracious one's bed,' she called out breathlessly; 'will she not soon enter it?'

'Oh Gertrud,' I cried, remembering the garret and forgetting the ghoul, 'which bed?'

'With the aid of the chambermaid I have removed two of them into the passage,' said Gertrud, buttoning me into my coat.

'And the wash-stand?'

She shook her head. 'That I could not remove, for there is no other to be had in its place. The chambermaid said that in four weeks' time' —she stopped and scanned my face. 'The gracious one looks put out,' she said. 'Has anything happened?'

'Put out? My dear Gertrud, I have been thinking of very serious things. You cannot expect me to frolic along paths of thought that lead to mighty and unpleasant truths. Why should I always smile? I am not a Cheshire cat.'

'I trust the gracious one will come in now and enter her bed,' said Gertrud decidedly, who

had never heard of Cheshire cats, and was sure that the mention of them indicated a brain in need of repose.

'Oh Gertrud,' I cried, intolerably stirred by the bare mention of that bed, 'this is a bleak and mischievous world, isn't it? Do you think we shall ever be warm and comfortable and happy again?'