a high and barren mountain range quivering in the hot mid-day air like a *fata morgana*: the Karst Mountains stretching along the Jugo-Slavaian Coast of the mainland.

The plain along the road rolled by, barren, sunny and desolate. Disturbed from his prey a hawk flapped heavy wings and soared upward, his hoarse cry disrupting the dead silence. We passed through old villages surrounded by walls of loose stones. The characteristic shape of their *campaniles* betrayed early Venetian origin. Ossero, located on a narrow strait between two islands, traces its origin back to classical antiquity when Roman galleys in the protection of the islands sailed up and down the coast of Istria and Illyria.

At length, from the top of a hill, we saw our goal: San Martino di Cherso, a small fishing village stretching along the blue bay in which white surf swished up the bright beach. On the road down, we encountered donkeys laden with heavy bundles of helichrysum plants which were thus transported from the islands to the distillation plants in San Martino di Cherso. On approaching the houses we passed through a large crowd of people lining both sides of the road and to our surprise heard that these good villagers, dressed in their best clothes, had been awaiting our arrival for hours. The day before, the news had spread through the hamlet that visitors from America were to inspect the distillation plant to take moving pictures and now everyone hoped to participate and be shown, perhaps, in Hollywood. In the great confusion following our arrival we finally retired into the little general store run by the proprietor in combination with his distillery. Through the open office window glistened the bright blue mirror of the Adriatic and directly below, the sea swished gently against the walls of the building.

Presently the distillery became the center of attraction and for hours was besieged. Children and adults peeked through doors and windows and visitors crowded the store, allegedly to buy all kinds of utensils, in reality to get a closer glimpse of the strangers. Certainly our visit, so it seemed, was the major event of the year and the store did a rushing business. It appeared almost impossible to take pictures of the distillation of plants and the unloading of arriving pack animals without a dozen people jumping into the scene in the last second. Several men, obviously proud of their linguistic talents, told us in English that for years they had been living in America until the depression sent them back home.

The distillery was quite modern and consisted of a few large and well constructed steam stills with a separate steam boiler, an equipment rather surprising for such a primitive village. It was interesting to learn that the whole community depended a great deal on the distillation of a few essential oils for their livelihood. Fishing with an additional small packing plant represented the main occupation of the population, but the distillery added considerably to their income. The general store, like an outpost in the Canadian wilderness, supplied the villagers with many simple necessities such as tools, household implements, dry goods and a few important nutriments. Trading between distiller-merchant and peasants was done on almost a bartering basis. During the year the farmers bought on credit and at the harvest period repaid their debts by supplying the distillation plant with sage and helichrysum flower material cut from the nearby mountains.

The reception in the village was genuinely wholehearted. In the house of our friend, the distiller, we were served a seven course dinner with fresh fish and an eight-pound lobster, delicious with the taste of choice Dalmatian wines.

Late in the afternoon after many visits we finally started on our way back. Six more people packed into the car to give us an escort of honor to the hilltop where we stopped to say the final goodbye. I looked back; far down the little village of San Martino di Cherso appeared, now almost entirely shrouded in falling darkness. On the Western horizon the setting sun, a gigantic ball of fire, sank into the sea. The sky Eastward had turned into a hue of bluish steel, but the Western firmament was still ablaze in a gorgeous play of rich colors and immense bundles of light rays shot into the spheres symbolizing in majestic display, unity of time and peace.