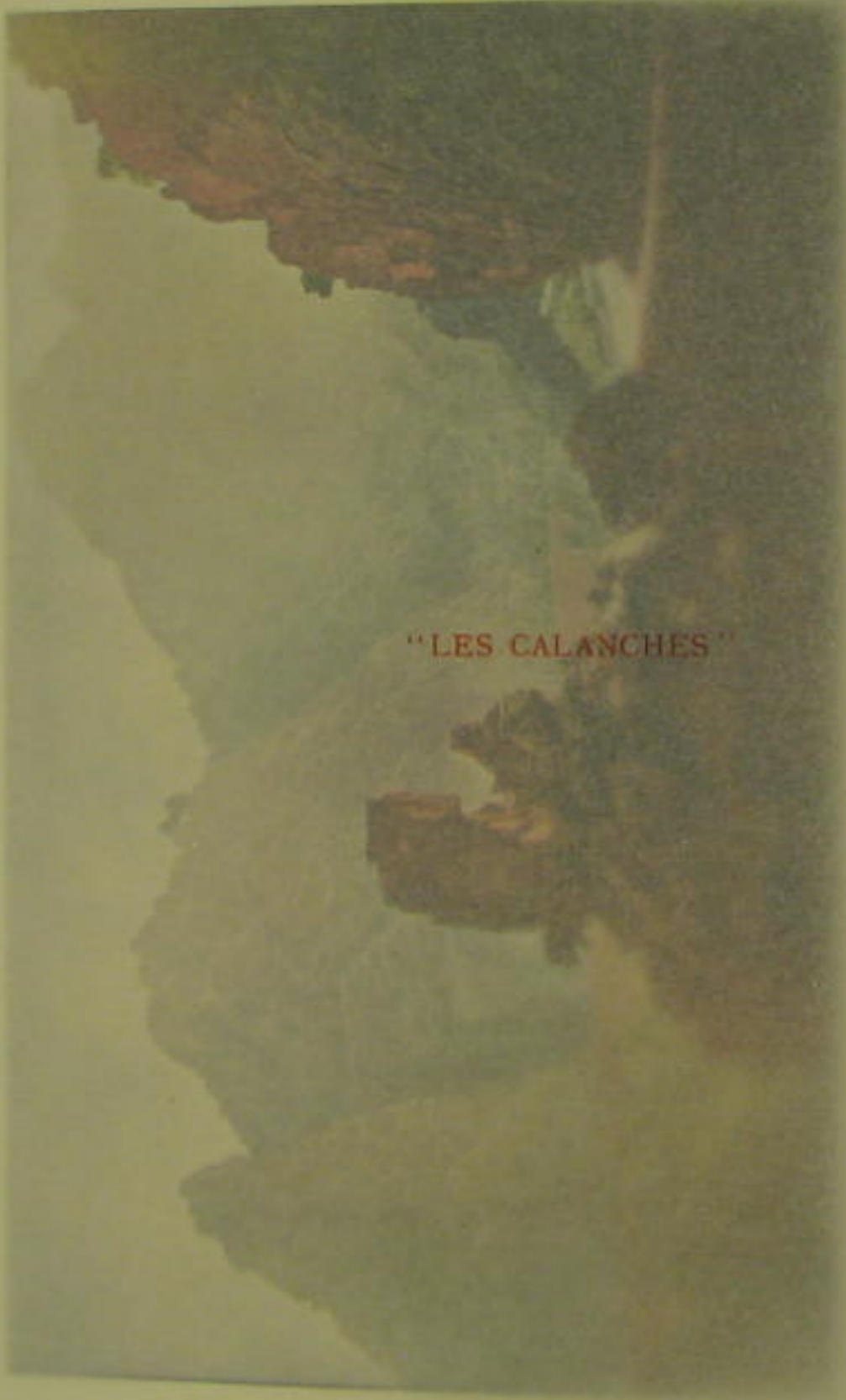


CYCLING THROUGH CORSICA.



"LES CALANCHES"

CYCLING THROUGH CORSICA.



MORE than a hundred years ago, Boswell, the biographer of Dr. Johnson, visited the island of Corsica, and wrote a book about it. In the preface he said, "No apology shall be offered for presenting the world with an account of Corsica." I feel that I may echo his words, for to-day the world knows almost as little of the romantic land of Corsica as it knew in Boswell's time.

Corsica was the birthplace of Napoleon; Corsica is the land of the Vendetta; this is the sum of popular information



APPROACHING BASTIA

concerning Corsica. That it is an island Switzerland;

that it possesses towering peaks, wild mountain gorges, fruitful valleys, and interesting medieval cities; that perfect roads traverse the island and penetrate to its remotest regions; these things have not been widely published. Nor is it suspected that in scenic beauty the highway along the western coast of Corsica is no unworthy rival of that famous section of the Corniche Road between Nice and the frontier of Italy. And this terra incognita, so full of promise to the traveler and touring cyclist, lies within sight of the much-frequented Riviera.

The Corsicans are proverbially one of the bravest races in the world. Although conquered by the Romans three centuries before Christ, they were continually in a state of insurrection, and at that period displayed the same love of liberty that has animated them throughout succeeding ages. Corsicans carried to Rome as slaves were so fiercely unmanageable that masters gladly sent them back again to their wild mountain homes. Other nations in turn, the Carthaginians, the Saracens, the Pisans, and the Genoese have



THE PORT AT BASTIA

ruled or misruled the island. But never has the spirit of the Corsicans been broken. To-day, under French rule, Corsica is at peace with all the world, but she with difficulty assimilates the civilization offered her by France. The French Republic has found it well-nigh impossible to change the warlike character of this island people, whose occupation, war, is gone, and who in its stead have as yet shown no love for commerce or for agriculture.

It was from Nice that we set sail for Corsica one lovely evening toward the end of May. An all-night voyage is before us, yet such a voyage!—calm seas, warm breezes, a glorious moon, across the face of which occasionally swept huge masses of silvery clouds hastening northward to their



BUILDINGS AT BASTIA

nightly resting-places on the summits of the Maritime Alps. The voyage itself is far too short; we wake next morning to find our ship approaching Bastia, the largest city of the island. The name of this place is not so familiar to the stranger as that of Ajaccio, the capital, on the western coast;



A LEVEL HIGHWAY

but Bastia is in every respect, save the political, the more important city of the two. It is the larger, for its population numbers twenty-four thousand and that of Ajaccio only seventeen thousand. It owes its commercial importance to its situation near the northeast corner of the island, for it is only seven hours' sail from Leghorn, in Italy, while Nice may be reached in a dozen hours, and Marseilles itself within eighteen.

Bastia viewed from the harbor presents a most attractive picture; its tall houses, the stately cathedral, and a towering

citadel rising to the left give it a dignity not usually enjoyed by cities of its size. Behind it rise the verdant mountains, their summits veiled in the morning mist. On their slopes we see innumerable tiny white structures; they are the burial chapels of the city's influential families.

Disembarking we shall find that Bastia bears the stamp of Genoa, for these sky-scraping tenements are also characteristic of that Italian city which so long and so cruelly ruled the destinies of Corsica. Corsica possesses quarries of the finest building-stone, but stone is seldom used. The houses are constructed of inferior material, of broken rock, cement,



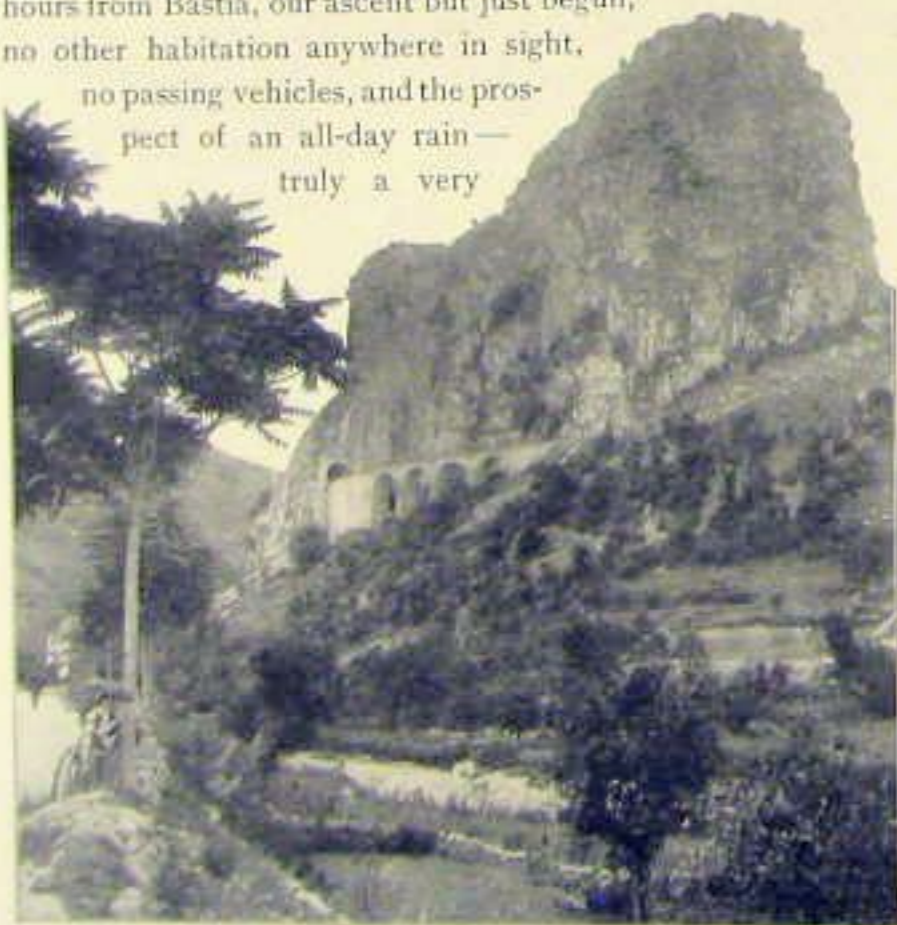
A DESERTED INN

and plaster, while porphyry, granite, alabaster, and precious marbles in incredible abundance lie ready to the builder's hand, but untouched and unappreciated.

We find but little to interest and less to charm us here in Bastia, and next morning we pedal blithely southward along a smooth, dusty road. To the right rise the mountain-ranges

which we are soon to cross. We have resolved to plunge at once into the interior, to cut directly through the heart of Corsica, climbing to the pass of Vizzavona and thence descending to Ajaccio on the western shore. The distance is only about one hundred miles. We do not, however, realize that we are undertaking an Alpine expedition. We expect, of course, a little uphill work, but I assure you that the highroad from coast to coast is in every sense a high road. Its skyward tendency sorely taxes the muscles of a cyclist fresh from the level boulevards of Paris. Nor did we foresee the anger of the god of storms who from his mountain throne shortly pours out his vials of wrath upon us and drives us into a deserted wayside inn for shelter. Only three hours from Bastia, our ascent but just begun,

no other habitation anywhere in sight,
no passing vehicles, and the prospect of an all-day rain—
truly a very



ROAD AND RAILROAD



EN ROUTE TO CALAUCCIA

encouraging outlook for two ambitious cyclists! But what a glorious storm!—rain, hail, and wind, thunder that even shakes the earth, blinding lightning that drives us far from the unglazed windows. It certainly seems as if all the elements are wrathfully defending the unwheeled interior of Corsica from the first invasion of the bicycle.

At last the tempest rolls away as swiftly as it came and on we ride. The scenic beauty of the route is ample recompense for any discomfort, however, and so firm and smooth is the roadbed that when a railway train dashes across a viaduct and plunges into the tunnel's rocky mouth we do not envy its passengers, who must sacrifice to speed all true enjoyment of the splendid scenery of Corsica.

In 1895 there were in operation in Corsica about one hundred and eighty miles of railway constructed by the French government to create—not to supply—a demand for rapid transit. The Corsicans have far more time than

money to spend upon their travels, and are content to jog along on horse- or donkey-back over these splendid carriage routes. And as, a little farther on, we begin the ascent of a superb gorge, we are inclined to question the wisdom of the French administration in creating these magnificent highways in a land where good roads are neither demanded nor appreciated by the population; but as wheelmen, we can



CALACUCCIA

rejoice at their existence while doubting the need of them. During our trip around the island we met not more than a dozen passenger-vehicles, and comparatively few carts.

At last, after many miles of uphill work, we emerge into a valley dominated by a range of snow-capped mountains. The loftiest peak of this great central chain is Monte Cinto, nearly nine thousand feet in height. Corsica is only one hundred and sixteen miles in length and fifty-two in breadth; and the mountains rising to such imposing heights within so



IN THE GORGES



GIVING THE
LANDLADY A LESSON

limited a space give to the scenery a rugged wildness that makes this Mediterranean island one of the most picturesque in all the world. Before us lies the town of Calacuccia which boasts an excellent albergo, where we win favor with the coquettish old landlady by giving her lessons in the art of bicycle-riding. Our wheels are, naturally, not really adapted for a rider of the gentler sex, but this makes no difference to

our pupil who perseveres unto the seventh tumble.

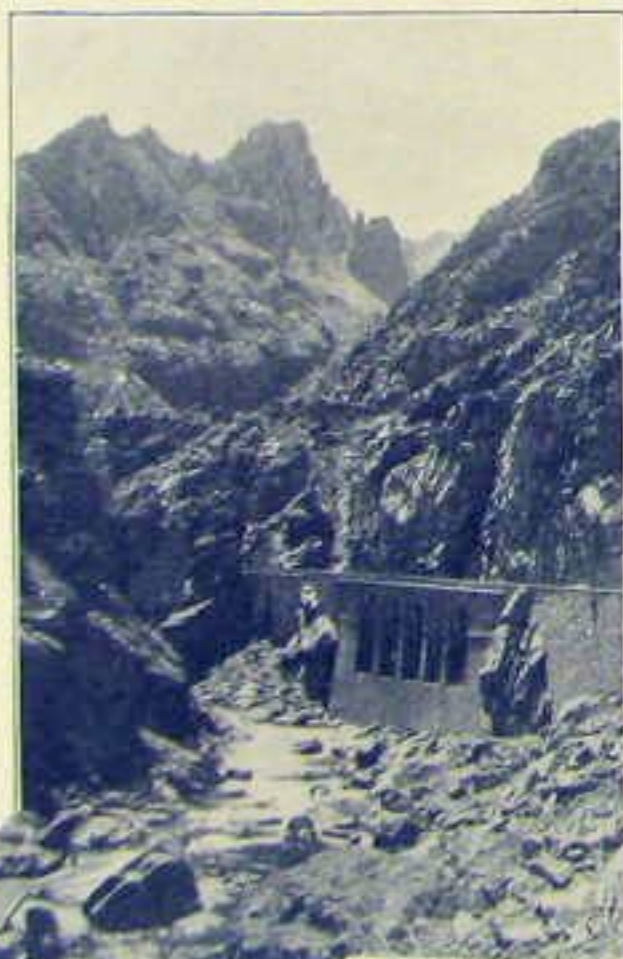
I have as yet said nothing of the grandeur of the gorge through which we passed to reach this place, and through which we must now return to join the highroad leading up to Corte, the most important town of the interior. The pleasure of our first run through the gorge was marred to some extent by the fatigue, for it was an unbroken ascent of many miles. But now our work is done. A "coast" of more than nine magnificent miles awaits us; and such a coast! Imagine gliding with effortless speed through a defile that grows more and more impressive as we descend. The gorge is called *La Scala di Santa Regina*, the Stairway of the Holy Queen; and through it flows the River Golo, the longest, wildest, and most picturesque in Corsica.

One comic incident causes us much amusement here. A young bull wandering in these solitudes takes fright at our steeds of steel and dashes wildly down the road, striving vainly to escape. He will not stop to let us pass, and we are afraid to make a spurt to pass him lest that demon of a bull should prove to be possessed of Spanish blood; so on

we go around curves, between high rocky walls, the panting bull ever in the lead. He now and then looks back as if to measure his chances for a successful charge at us. Unintentional as is this down-hill pursuit we should not favor a reversal of the situation, for a "scorch" up hill with a horned animal in full bellow behind us would not be to our liking. Accordingly we call the bull pet-names, and strive to win his confidence—all this time, of course, coasting madly down the grand ravine. But our shouts serve only to increase the creature's speed, until at last our victim, thoroughly exhausted, backs up against the rocky wall and with terror-stricken eyes watches his two uncanny pursuers glide

swiftly around a turn and thus out of his sight.

Glorious is not the word that will qualify this ride. We shall run out of adjectives before the journey is half done. We feel a mad desire to pile superlative upon superlative until the mass of our expressed enthusiasm towers high above these peaks and then to crown all with a last great gasp of inexpressible admiration.



LA SCALA DI SANTA REGINA

But we must not allow our regard for that which is superb in Corsican nature to hide from us that which is grand in Corsican manhood; for Corsica boasts a line of heroes with characters as rugged as her scenery, with souls as aspiring as her mountain-peaks, with patriotic aims as pure, as free from worldly taint, as yonder fleecy clouds in her blue sky.



CORTE

Yes, as we glide still deeper into this wild island of the Corsicans and mentally review their history* from its dawn until the present day, we find that they have not enjoyed in all more than one hundred years of tranquillity and peace. Just think for a moment what that statement means! An isolated people numbering even now only about three hundred thousand souls, their island far removed from the pathway of great European wars, and yet they have not known a hundred years of peace since history began! And as we sweep on and on yet ever downward in a vain attempt to overtake the rushing river, we do not wonder that the people

* Mr. Hazen acknowledges his indebtedness to the books of Gregorovius, Howell, and Thiers for much information concerning Corsican history and customs.

who inhabit such a land, the people who have slept upon their arms since the infancy of Europe, can with justice claim that he who seeks may find in their own history a parallel for every great heroic action of antiquity. The seeds of independence were planted here before the people had emerged from barbarism, and these seeds were never killed by all the wars and conquests that Corsica has suffered.

The first great hero with whom we are brought face to face in Corsican history is Sambucuccio, who, eight hundred years ago, formed here a confederation as purely democratic as that enjoyed by the Swiss mountaineers to-day. This confederation, however, was overthrown at Sambucuccio's death.

The little city of Corte in the heart of Corsica has played a most important part in the wild eventful history of the island. Corte has

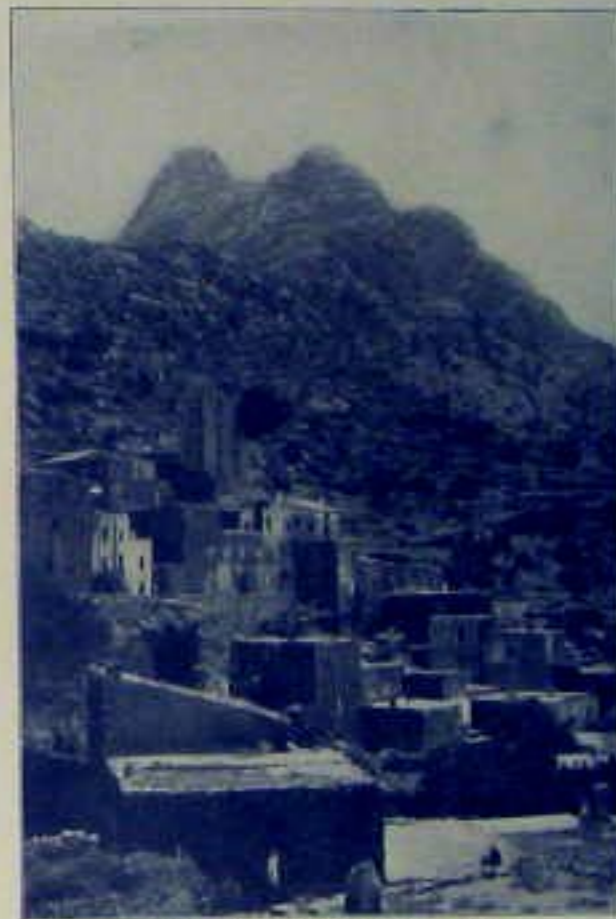


A CORNER OF CORTÉ

always been the rallying point of the patriot leaders and the last refuge of Corsican independence, and Corte was the headquarters of Pascal Paoli's ideal democratic government which was organized in 1755. But there are still three splendid types of Corsican leaders to consider before we can reach the epoch of Paoli, the greatest of them all. They are Sampiero the liberator, Gaffori the defender, and Theodore the king.

Sampiero came upon the scene in 1547. Cor-

sica was then the "Cuba" of the Genoese Republic. The inhuman exactions of the foreign government had reduced the island to ruin. Sampiero, a born leader of men, resolved to free his people. He obtained the aid of France and Turkey who sent fleets to assist him on the coast. At first fortune favored his cause. Many of the inland cities—Corte among them



A VILLAGE OF INHOSPITABLE ASPECT

—threw open their gates and hailed him as a deliverer. Only a single stronghold remained in the hands of Genoa. Then, when on the point of victory, his French allies made a perfidious treaty with Genoa, restored to her the captured fortresses, and left Sampiero to battle single-handed against the powerful republic. But he was equal to the task. For years Genoa dispatched her fleets and armies against the Corsicans in vain. Sampiero and his people—starving and naked—fought with a desperation born of their unquenchable hatred of the yoke of Genoa and their great love of country.

Strangely enough, the bravest of Sampiero's lieutenants bore the name "Napoleone," and was the first to make



IN THE VIZZAVONA FOREST

for herself and child, agreed to give herself up to the Genoese. Sampiero learning this arrested her in flight. The thought that she who bore his name—the name of Sampiero—should ever dream of yielding to his hereditary foes, so roused him that in a frenzy of patriotic passion he slew her with an unrelenting hand, not that he loved her less but that he loved the honor of his island more. His own death was as tragic as his life. His foes could not subdue him in the open field, so, after the manner of cowards, they planned to slay him in an ambushade. He who had braved a hundred armies at last fell hacked to pieces by the swords of paid assassins, and his head was borne in triumph to the Genoese governor who breathed more freely now that Sampiero was no more.

famous that name upon the field of battle, over two hundred years before the birth of him who was to write that name in letters ineffaceable on the page of history. Despairing of ultimate success unless he received assistance, Sampiero visited all the courts of Europe vainly imploring aid. In the meantime his wife, tempted by offers of pardon

At his death the victim of the perfidy of Genoa had reached the age of sixty-nine.

Filled with these thoughts of the heroic past, we make our way up the steep, crooked streets of Corte until we come to a spot where the houses suddenly shrink back from the edge of a precipice. The pyramid of rock on which the city stands seems to have been cleft in twain, and half the houses seem cast into the valley to form the little village far below.

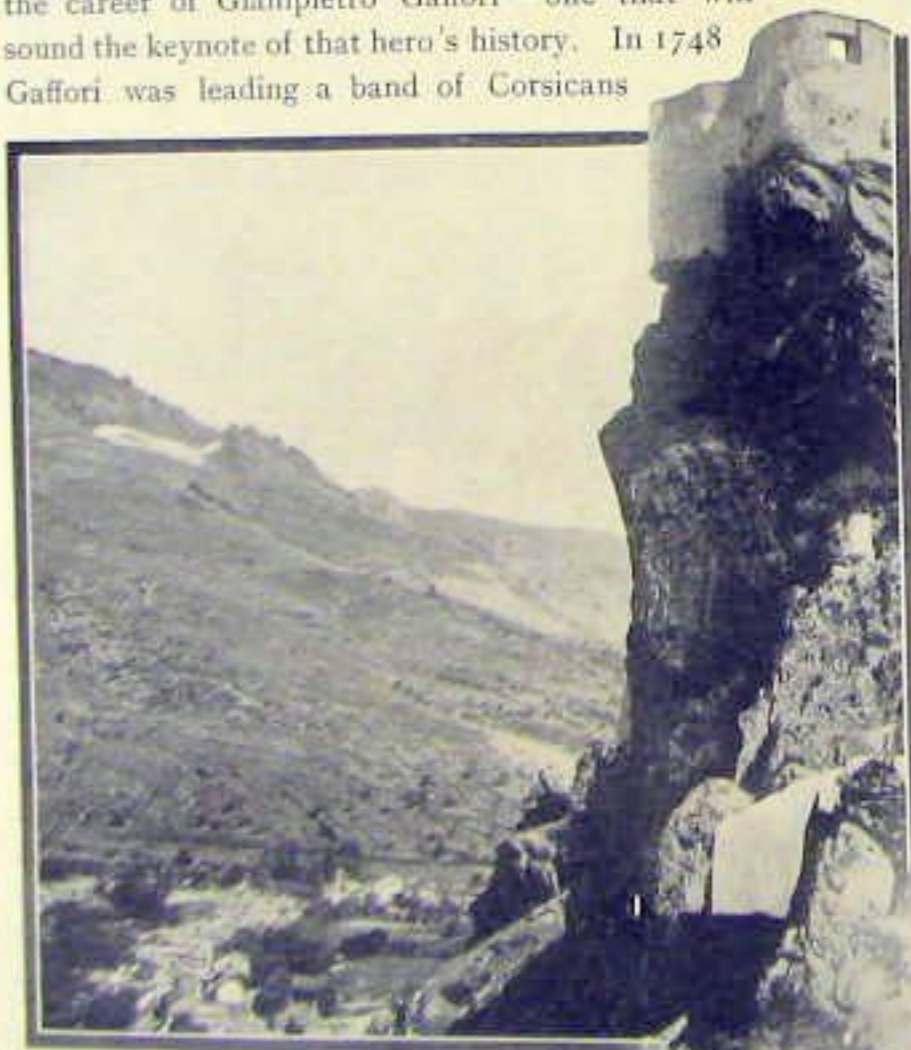


A SILENT, SOLID TOWN

And—think of it!—here in this mountain-girt capital of Corsica dwelt for a time the father of the Emperor Napoleon, for Charles di Buonaparte was private secretary to Paoli, while the latter was dictator of the island from 1755 to 1768. Here Joseph Buonaparte, destined to be king of Spain, was born. From this place, Letizia, the mother of so many royalties, fled after the overthrow of Paoli's army at the battle of Ponte Nuovo, only three months before Napoleon was given to the world.

Here dwelt the patriotic leader Gaffori. His bullet-riddled house still stands as a monument to the courage of his wife, who there defended herself from the attacks of Genoese assailants. When her friends counseled her to yield, she prepared a barrel of gunpowder and threatened to annihilate herself, her house, and all its inmates should they attempt to raise a flag of truce. She thus held out until her husband and his followers arrived to drive away the troops of Genoa.

As we contemplate the old Genoese citadel perched on the apex of the rocky pyramid, we recall another incident in the career of Giampietro Gaffori—one that will sound the keynote of that hero's history. In 1748 Gaffori was leading a band of Corsicans



IN THE HEART OF CORSICA



A RELIGIOUS FÊTE



THE CITADEL OF CORTÉ

against the Genoese garrison of this imposing fortress. The commander, seeing that its fall was imminent if the energetic bombardment should effect a breach, bound the young son of Gaffori, recently captured by the garrison, to the outer walls, hoping thus to restrain the Corsicans from further cannonade. The

horror-stricken father, for a moment only, gazed upon his little child hanging against the battered walls, and then with averted face firmly bade his men continue the attack. The boy is lost to sight amid clouds of smoke, an iron hail beats on the crumbling walls, a breach is made, the citadel is taken; and Gaffori, as if Providence had reserved a great reward for his Spartan heroism, finds his dear son unharmed



THE VALLEY OF CORTE

and folds him to his heart! Like Sampiero, Gaffori fell at last through the perfidy of Genoa, whose only potent weapon against the Corsican patriots was assassination.

Filled with a growing respect for the land which has given birth to men like these, we leave this heroic city and begin the lonely ascent toward the pass of Vizzavona, the gateway between the eastern and western regions of the island. Our route lies up an ever-deepening valley. On either side rise cloud-capped peaks; a splendid highroad winds along the mountain-side; the grade is such that now



BRIDGES OLD AND NEW



A VALLEY

and then we must dismount and walk; yet we find this no hardship, for we are thus enabled more thoroughly to enjoy the glorious scenes every turn reveals to us.

Unfortunately, the lower regions of the valley are veiled in fog, the mountain-tops in drifting vapors. Yet this is indeed the Corsica of our dreams. The lowering clouds, which seem to shut us off from the outer world, give to these scenes an air of remoteness which adds immensely to their charm. Even the presence of the recently constructed railway bridge does not destroy our sense of isolation. And on we toil, now riding a hundred yards, now pausing in admiration of a newly revealed panorama, then trudging skyward, leading our lightly laden wheels. It requires far less effort to lead a bicycle uphill than to carry a knapsack on one's shoulders. Thus on the up-grades we become temporarily pedestrians, and our wheels convenient luggage-carriers which,



ABOVE THE CLOUDS

instead of being incumbrances, lighten our labor. As we mount heavenward, the misty mantle of the sky descends to meet us, until at last we are almost enshrouded in a sunset-tinted veil. Below us gapes an unfathomable ravine from the depths of which the roar of troubled waters constantly arises. We know that we must now be near the entrance to the Vizzavona forest,—a forest which at a height of more than three thousand feet above the sea is folded round the shoulders of the island. Upon these heights we find no sign of life, no travelers to greet, nothing but the solitude of nature in one of her grandest moods. Here for a few moments we are enveloped by a snow-storm. We may now



PIGRIEN'S REST

imagine ourselves in Norway in winter time, when in reality we are in the latitude of Italy, and in the month of June. Suddenly the flurry ends, and soon we find ourselves in the stately corridor cut by the highroad through the Vizzavona forest. Tall pines and beeches rise in serried ranks on either side. The ascending road is smooth and fine as those in our city-parks; it leads us onward to the crest of the great central mountain-chain which like a mighty wall divides the island into two equal parts.

The western part is narrow and rugged, its shores descend precipitously to the Mediterranean waves and are deeply indented with bays and gulfs. The eastern shore, that facing Italy, is low, marshy, and feverish near the sea, then at some distance from the coast the foothills rise, then mountains of graded heights, until at last the snow-capped monsters of the towering central range stand forth to bid the East remain forever separated from the West. And as if to emphasize that stern command of nature, the Genoese—those arbiters of Corsica's existence during so many long cruel years—reared here upon the boundary a grim old fort which effectually commands the pass of Vizzavona.



HEIGHTS AND DEPTHS

We are at a height of over thirty-five hundred feet, above us rises the Mount of Gold, *Il Monte d'Oro*, in altitude the third in Corsica, being surpassed in height only by Monte Cinto and Monte Rotondo. At the rustic inn of Vizzavona we make the acquaintance of a young lawyer from New York who tells us that for ten days he has been tramping alone through these mountain solitudes, sleeping at night in the cottages of forest-guards or of the cantonniers.



DOWN THROUGH VILLAGE AFTER VILLAGE

Seduced by the alluring speed with which we travel, he agrees to join us later in Ajaccio and to cycle with us up the western coast.

The Vizzavona Pass marks the end of our long climb and the beginning of a thrilling down-hill dash. There lies before us a descent of thirty miles. How quickly are the hours of slow up-hill toil forgot; how our whole being thrills with pleasure as with feet upon the "coasters," hands upon the brake, we—with a swoop like that of eagles flying low—wing around sharp curves, then dash away with speed all



MONTE D'ORO

unrestrained down some straight section of the route until another turn calls into use the brake. It is the fashion to sneer at brakes on bicycles. Well, let the sneerer start from Vizzavona for Ajaccio, and I will promise you that he will sneer no more. As the Irishman has said, " 'Tis better to be a coward for a few hours than a corpse all the days of your life."

But there are other things to fear than broken necks, for our route soon brings us into the domain of the most famous modern bandits, the celebrated Bellacoscia brothers. A goatherd points out to us the entrance to the gorge of "Pentica," where the Bellacoscia brothers and their clan have set law at defiance for more than forty years. They have built houses there, they there raise cattle, they have amassed wealth and live in the midst of large families, feared and respected by their neighbors and as free upon their stolen lands as any sovereign in his hereditary kingdom. These Bellacoscias have a European reputation. Antonio, the elder, having killed a man, became an outlaw in 1848, or in the language of the bandit he "took to the *mucchia*."



A CORNIC "COAST"



NEAR THE LAIR OF BELLACOSCIA

that is, he fled from justice and disappeared in the thick underbrush called *macchia* which is the characteristic covering of the Corsican mountain slopes. The younger brother, Jacques, soon joined the elder in the brush. To-day these men are old; the valley is peopled by their children and grandchildren. We learn with amazement that the bandits control the local elections of the region, levy assessments upon rich and poor, obtain for their friends fat governmental and municipal appointments, and render unendurable the existence of their enemies. Nor are these men looked upon as robbers and murderers; they have solved the problem of taking without stealing and killing without murdering. A Corsican bandit is not a brigand or highwayman; he is simply an unfortunate individual who, as a result of one of those fatal little accidents so common here, finds his hands stained with blood, and to escape both French justice and Corsican vengeance, flees to the *macchia* and becomes an outlaw. He lives in close communion with family and friends, and receives from them food and supplies, unless, like the Bellacoscias, he becomes so powerful that others look to him for aid instead of extending help to him. This being the status of the bandit-question, we give up

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THERE'S A STRANGER AT THE INN

old way; and this adventure cost us only sixty centimes—in other words, we paid four-cents to each of the young robbers for their kindness in assaulting us.

Although we did not personally meet any real heroes of the *macchia*, they do exist in great numbers. It is affirmed by the officials that there are to-day no fewer than six hundred men leading the life of bandits in these Corsican highlands. They wage perpetual war upon the poor gendarmes whose thankless task it is to pursue them vainly through

hopes of any exciting adventures, but realizing that a tour in Corsica would not be complete without some kind of an encounter, we subsidize three terrible descendants of the Bellacoscias to hold us up in the good



BANDITTY

these lonely regions—thankless because as a rule the bandits are favored and assisted by the peasantry and villagers. The Corsican outlaws know how to hold the sympathies of their neighbors. They become the avengers of the weak and oppressed, thus winning favor with the poor, or they become in secret the salaried retainers of some wealthy family. For instance, you pay the bandit and protect him with your influence, and he puts himself and his rifle at your command. If you have a laggard debtor, the bandit will undertake to bring



THE CORSICAN SISTERS

about a speedy payment. His argument—a rifle barrel protruding from a bush—is irresistible. If on the contrary you are pressed by a creditor, the bandit will procure more time. If you have on hand a lawsuit, the bandit will demonstrate to your adversary the fact that he is in the wrong and that he should withdraw his suit. The bandit, in a word, becomes a sort of social regulator; the fear that he inspires hangs over every one of the villages past which we dash with

such exhilarating speed. Some inconceivable things are told us in regard to these gallant outlaws. One of them—a popular assassin—was actually voted a generous annual pension by the town of which he had been mayor. Again, a certain M. Canilla, a candidate for office, was condemned to a year's imprisonment presumably for fraud on the eve of an election. A bandit who was in his pay presented himself



A CORSICAN LANDSCAPE

before the authorities and merely remarked, "You know I approve of no delegate other than Canilla," and Canilla was promptly released and elected by a large majority.

But now enough of bandits; let us hasten on to civilization and Ajaccio. From our window in the excellent Hotel Bellevue we look out on a public square. In winter Ajaccio vies with the cities of the Riviera as a pleasure station, but

at present it is simply a quiet provincial city with nothing to suggest that it is the capital of one of the most turbulent provinces of France. Its people are to-day, as Boswell described them more than a century ago, "the genteel in the land."

One of the most genteel of its families in Boswell's time was that of a certain notary and advocate, of Italian origin, Carlo di Buonaparte. The Buonapartes had come in early days from Sarzana in Tuscany. In 1764 the young notary married and established himself in a comparatively luxurious



AJACCIO

house in one of Ajaccio's narrow streets. His bride, Letizia Ramolino, was only fifteen years of age; she was of a peasant type, hardy and frugal, but fair in form and feature. Their first-born died in infancy; the second child, a daughter, also died. In 1768 at Corte there was born a son who was baptized as "Nabulione," but this name was later changed to Joseph. The father was at that time Paoli's secretary, and when the patriot government was overthrown by the French, in 1769, the family fled from Corte and hid



THE HOME OF THE BUONAPARTE FAMILY

themselves in the mountains. Then, when the French were firmly established, the father made his peace with the new administration, was naturalized as a French citizen, and entered government employ. Thus his next child, a son born three months later, on the very day that Corsica was formally proclaimed a part of France, was, despite his Corsican descent, a Frenchman by birth. We may enter to-day the little room in which Letizia bore the son whose name



WHERE NAPOLEON WAS BORN

was called Napoleon. The date was Aug. 15, 1769. This son was one of thirteen children, of whom five died in childhood. We are told that at his baptism the infant struggled fiercely with the priest, as if moved by a desire to baptize himself; for was he not the same who thirty-five years later was to wrest the imperial diadem from the hands of the very Pope of Rome and with it crown himself?

A coincidence that almost makes us shudder, so like the work of fate it seems, has been revealed by the discovery of an old copy-book, used by Napoleon in his early school-days.



NEAR THE PORT, AJACCIO

On the last page is a scrawl, the termination of a geographical exercise, a list of the possessions of the English. The last words are, "*Sainte Hélène, petite île.*" "St. Helena, a little island." Is it due to chance that on the last page of his copy-book we find these fateful words,—the words which in after years were written in tears upon the last page of his life,—"St. Helena"?

What an amazing chain of events connects this humble birth-chamber of a baby Corsican with the unapproachably superb mausoleum of the Emperor Napoleon! Think how much history has been created by the progress of one human being from that little room in far-off, unknown Corsica to the imperial sepulcher in the midst of Paris the magnificent!

More than twenty-two thousand volumes of praise or

censure illuminate Napoleon's awful progress from the humble birthplace to the imperial tomb. How difficult it is for us to picture the Napoleon of history as a little boy playing in the narrow street before his father's door! As a child he did not know a word of French, that language in which he was one day to issue his commands to kings. It is related that when attending school in Corsica he was much teased by his companions because his stockings were always down over his shoes; and to-day in the very street where the boy Napoleon was ridiculed we see a little fellow whose stockings are worn in that same neglectful Napoleonic style.

We read also of his devotion to the little girls—to one especially whose name was Giacommetta. Ah, could she but



WHERE NAPOLEON PLAYED AS A BOY

have read the future, how dearly would that little lass of Corsica have cherished the affection of her awkward sweetheart!

Of his early education Napoleon himself has said, "Like everything else in Corsica, it was pitiful." Yet in his youth



EMPERATOR

he was intensely patriotic. When his French schoolmates, to exasperate him, brought a sweeping charge of cowardice against all Corsicans, he, then only ten years old, replied with dignity, "If the French had been but four to one, they would never have taken Corsica; but they were ten to one." "But you had a fine general,—Paoli," some one said. "Yes, I would much like to emulate him," Napoleon replied.

Again, he replied to taunts about his native land, "I hope one day to be in a position to give Corsica her liberty."

While at Brienne, the young Napoleon came suddenly upon a portrait of Choiseul, the Minister of Louis XV who had made the infamous purchase of Corsica from Genoa. The boy seized with ungovernable anger, hurled insults and imprecations at the silent canvas.

And as in the public square of Ajaccio we stand before a monumental group of the sons of that local notary—one of them an emperor, three of them kings, Joseph, Louis, and Jerome—only one, Lucien, with an uncrowned head—we recall another anecdote of the boy Napoleon. In the garden of the Brienne Academy each pupil had assigned to him a little piece of ground for cultivation. Napoleon, by force,

annexed the neglected possessions of his two nearest neighbors, and raised a lofty hedge about his conquered territory; much as in later years he took from the kings and princes of astonished Europe their possessions to annex them to his growing empire, and raised around them a great hedge of military steel.

One day, discussing the life and death of Julius Cæsar, Napoleon said, "Who would not willingly be stabbed if he could only have been Cæsar? One feeble ray of his glory would be an ample recompense for sudden death." These things but prove what thoughts were ever stirring in the brain of that little Corsican, so insignificant, so frequently the laughing-stock of his aristocratic fellow-students at the Military School.

The mother of Napoleon is buried in Ajaccio. Her tomb is in the Chapelle Fesch. She lived to see the rise, the fall, the death, of her great son, and at the age of eighty-six passed peacefully away at Rome. Born in the lower walks of life, Letizia Ramolino saw her children seated upon the thrones of Europe; but Charles Buonaparte, the father, died

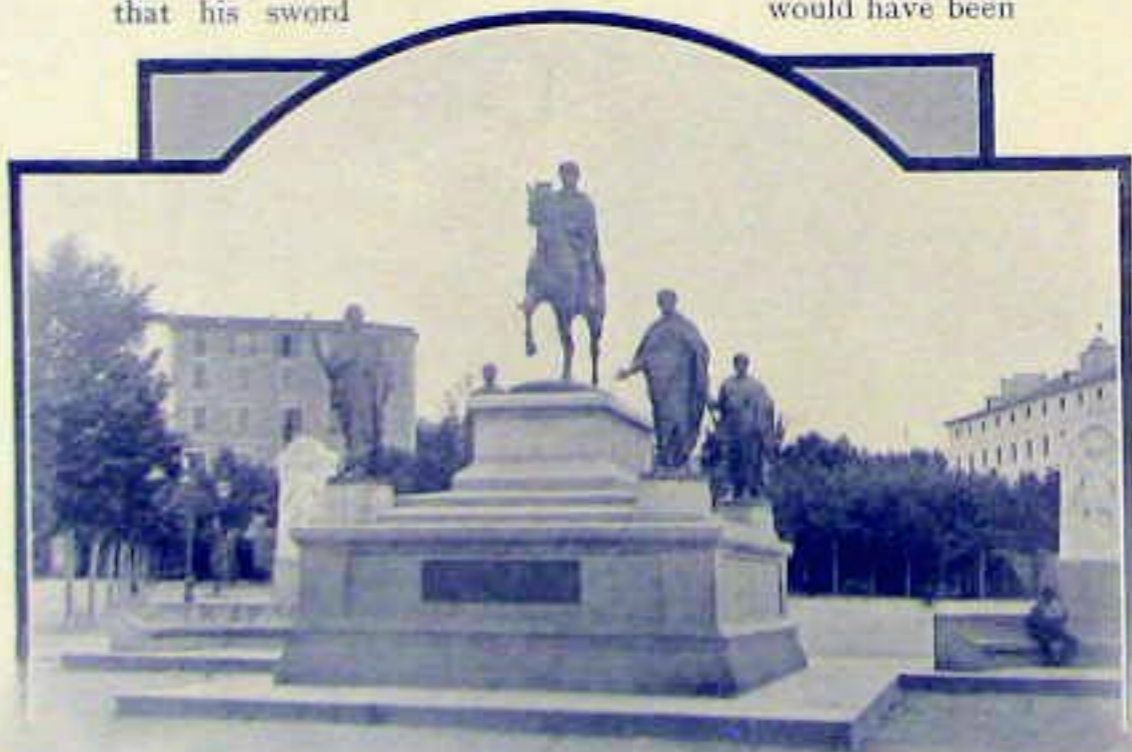


YOUNG CORSICANS

before the family found themselves in even comfortable circumstances; as late as 1787 the mother of an emperor, three kings, and three princesses, was yet dependent upon a governmental bounty, paid for the planting of mulberry-trees in Corsica.

Yes, as we sit in a shady square and watch the ships at anchor in the harbor, we must not forget that the future conqueror of Europe was once a poor young man—a very poor young officer in the service of King Louis the XVI.

It was during his early days, as a soldier in the army of King Louis, that Napoleon wrote and rewrote a history of Corsica. It is said to have shown little research and no scholarship, but to have been full of hatred for France and love for Corsica and admiration of her heroes. Napoleon, in accepting a military education from France, had but been sharpening his weapons on the grindstone of the enemy; and had not the Revolution changed his life, it is almost certain that his sword would have been



AFRAID OF STRANGERS

turned against the power of France—that his life-work would have been the liberation of his native island.

At the outbreak of the Revolution, however, we find Napoleon at Ajaccio as an ardent agitator addressing Jacobin Clubs and aiding in the formation of the National Guard. He was elected to the second command in the Corsican battalion, and was ordered to the southern end of the island on military duty. Let us follow him to the curious old city of Bonifacio, perched on the southernmost cliffs of Corsica, commanding the strait



WHERE THE MOTHER OF NAPOLEON IS BURIED

which separates the island from Sardinia. Here Napoleon spent eight months of his military service, and it was from this city that he set out upon his first warlike expedition.

Few know the story of the first military action of the young Napoleon. His battalion was ordered to make an assault upon the little island of Santa Maddalena near the Sardinian shore. Napoleon burned to distinguish himself, but his superior officer gave him no opportunity; a retreat was ordered after a feeble demonstration, and the expedition ended without glory or result. The disappointed Napoleon returned to Bonifacio with his yearnings for distinction unappeased. On the very quay to which our ship is moored,



THE PORT OF BONIFACIO



A FORTIFIED APPROACH

Napoleon's life was once threatened by a mob of mariners from Marseilles. He was denounced as a traitor to the Revolution, accused of being an aristocrat, and he narrowly escaped being killed in the resulting tumult.

From the mooring-place a steep winding ramp leads up to the great city-gate, a grim, forbidding portal to a gloomy isolated city; for Bonifacio, despite its splendid situation, is a most cheerless place. It was the first city of the island to fall into the power



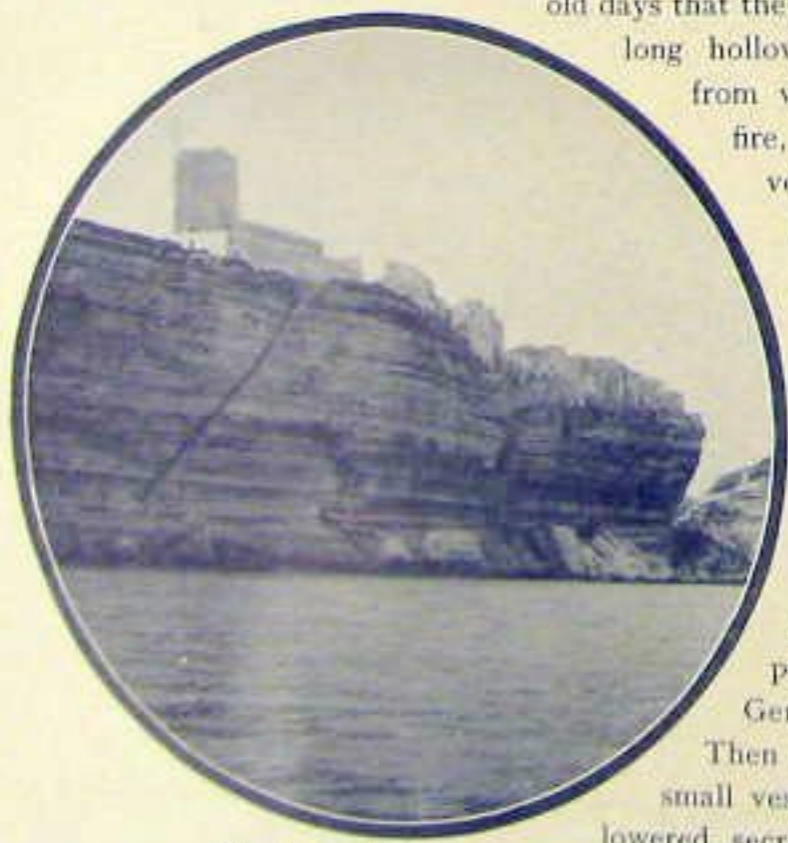
GATE OF BONIFACIO

of the Genoese, who exiled the native inhabitants and planted here a colony of their own people. Hence Bonifacio was accorded many privileges and remained faithful to the cruel Republic while many other cities of the island frequently rebelled.

As we view the stronghold from the sea, we understand why it has so successfully withstood its many sieges. The most determined one was that of the King of Aragon, who came to claim the crown of Corsica because the pope had said that it was his if he could get it. A steep stairway cut in the face of the cliff was made, so we are told, in a single night by the soldiers of the King of Aragon who hoped by means of it to scale the cliffs, surprise and take the city.

Moreover, we are told by the astonished historians of those old days that the King's men carried long hollow tubes of metal from which, by means of fire, round balls were vomited with fearful noise. To-day, alas! the use of firearms in Corsica is far too common to excite surprise.

Meantime the Genoese within the walls fought bravely on, and prayed for aid from Genoa. None came. Then daring men built a small vessel, and in it were lowered secretly from the city



THE STAIRWAY OF THE KING OF ARAGON



BONIFACIO

walls into the sea. In proof that such a thing was possible we have but to draw nearer to the cliffs. They literally overhang the waves.

Thus safely launched, the little craft set sail for Genoa to make known the distress of Bonifacio. Meantime the Spaniards made repeated fierce attacks. At last the tiny boat returned from Genoa one night, and was safely hoisted



FISHING CRAFT

to the battlements. Its crew brought only promises of armed assistance. Nevertheless the enemy was much amazed to see on the morrow a glittering army parade around the walls. "Does the army of Genoa then have wings?" they asked, "thus to fly into a beleaguered city which we so closely guard?" But the "army" was composed of Bonifacio's women. Donning the armor of the sick and of the dead, they appeared in numbers on fortifications to make the enemy believe that the expected reinforcements had arrived. And finally, after all their sufferings and hero-

ism, the people of this little city were succored by the fleets of Genoa, and the King of Aragon departed without a crown. Thus Bonifacio remained in the possession of the Genoese.

From 1348 until the cession of Corsica to France, more than four centuries later, Genoa exercised a frightful tyranny over this brave island. As Spain in later years ruined Cuba and made a hopeless burden of what should have proved a valuable possession, so Genoa by unwise exactions and systematic massacres endeavored to crush the Corsicans. But always in vain; for every generation of Corsicans brought forth a hero to champion the cause of his people, to lead enthusiastic bands of patriots against the troops of the Republic.

We have already briefly considered the lives of Sampiero and Gaffori, both murdered by their country's foes. In 1736 there came upon the scene a man of different stamp, a foreigner and an adventurer, yet one whose aim, although selfish, was identical with that of his nobler predecessors. He was a West-

phalian baron, Theodore de



THE WORK OF THE WAVES



LOOKING TOWARD SARDINIA

Neuhof. He promised to secure for Corsica her liberty, but asked as a reward that he be made king and that the throne of Corsica be confirmed to his descendants.

Corsica, suffering and distracted, received the proposition favorably and saluted the Westphalian baron as King Theodore the First. His crown was not a crown of gold—his subjects were too poor to give him that, and so they placed upon his brow a nobler crown, one formed of oak and laurel leaves. This strange man was already Grandee of Spain, Peer of France, British Lord, Count of the Holy Kingdom, and Prince of the Roman Empire. He promised his new people the support of many foreign courts against the power of Genoa, but either he himself, being over-sanguine, was deceived or he deceived the Corsicans, for no help came.

The Genoese turned loose from the walled cities, which they always managed to hold throughout the numberless revolts, a troop of convicts and bandits who devastated the land. Theodore's forces were defeated, and he fled to the continent to secure the promised aid; but after many fruitless efforts to regain his kingdom he was arrested for debt in London. Shortly after his release from prison he died in

poverty, having signed away his visionary throne to satisfy his creditors. Thus ended the career of Corsica's eccentric king.

But though King Theodore had disappeared, his subjects remained, defending themselves more fiercely than ever until Genoa, weary at last of endless wars, sold her pretended rights over this island to the French king, Louis the Fifteenth, less than a year before Napoleon was born.



FROM THE WINDOW OF THE INN

From Bonifacio we return to Ajaccio, as we came, by sea. The captain of our steamer and his officers are splendid types of hale and hearty Corsicans, full of affability toward the stranger and eager to assist in giving him a favorable impression of their country. On learning that we had crossed the island on our wheels the captain appeared thunderstruck.

"You gentlemen," he said, "will know our Corsica more thoroughly than any Corsican. Why, in a lifetime I have



THE FOUNDATIONS OF BONIFACIO



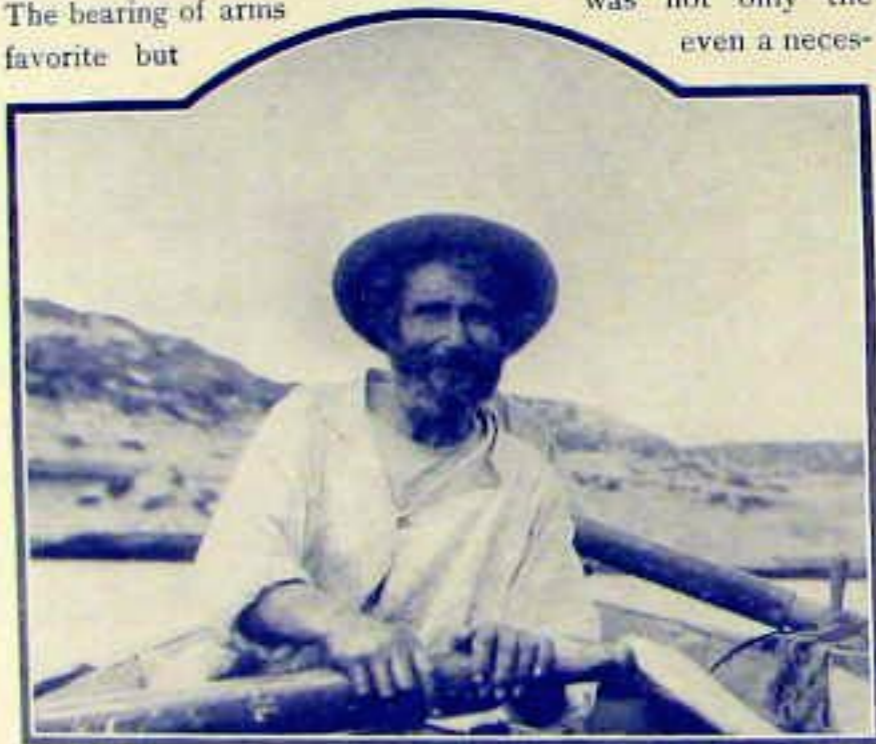
THE SHIP'S OFFICERS

not seen one half as much of it as you. But then you Americans are such peculiar people; you do everything so much faster than anybody else. Your country must be like the inside of my engine-room when the ship is traveling at her full speed!" And he added, "As you are seeing everything, you must before we sail visit the grotto of the Sdragonato."

He calls a boatman for us and soon we find ourselves in a small boat with an ancient mariner, en route for the famous marine cave in the cliff of Bonifacio. The boatman's face is one I shall not soon forget. It reflects the national dignity and pride of the Corsicans, mingled with simplicity and cordiality. These latter gentle virtues are quite as characteristic of the islanders. Old Josef—for such is his name—tells us that he has two children at school, and says that he must labor hard to give them all the education possible. This reminds us the average Corsican has a profound contempt for manual labor and an immense respect for learning; and, therefore, he will make every sacrifice to send

his children to the schools established by the French. In fact, the diffusion of instruction militates against the prosperity of the island. A boy who has a smattering of education disdains the farm or vineyard, and dreams of a professional career, a clerical position, or employment in one of the many bureaus of the government.

In former years men had no time for common labor. The bearing of arms was not only the favorite but even a neces-



A BONIFACIO BOATMAN

sary occupation for the men of Corsica, and although the military necessities of the past exist no more, the old disdain of work survives. Every year Corsica, poor as she is, imports from Italy a small army of laborers—Lucchesi, men of Lucca—to perform the heavy work on the roads and in the fields. Meantime the owners of neglected property discuss the political situation at the village taverns, for politics has supplanted war as the favorite pursuit of the Corsi-

cans, who now follow their leaders to the polls and fight around the ballot-boxes as fiercely as in the old days they fought around the strongholds of the Genoese.

Meantime our craft, propelled by the sturdy strokes of old Josef, has reached the narrow harbor-entrance under the shadow of the towering mass of chalk on which the city is enthroned; then, turning westward, we approach a great black opening in the cliff. The sea is almost calm; we glide without a moment's hesitation into a wave-created cavern. The grotto has but one entrance from the sea. Its vaulted roof is broken by an aperture from which there falls a flood of light tingeing the walls with gold and giving to the limpid water a peculiar tone—a mingling of the ocean's green with the deep blue of the sky. The opening above our heads is of an irregular and striking shape. Its outline is said to suggest the contour of the island itself; and, true enough, on drawing forth a map we find that even in many details the outline of the rocky opening and that of Corsica are strikingly alike.



HANDLING NETS

Returning to Ajaccio we resume our cycle journey. We are now three in number, a recruit in the person of the New York



CITIZENS AND VOTERS

attorney whom we met in Vizzavona forest having rented a bicycle and joined our ranks. Our departure from Ajaccio is an event in local history. Our wheels, photographic outfits, and baggage are examined and admired by a curious crowd. Our legal friend is everywhere mistaken for a book-agent. In one side-pocket is a guide to Corsica, in French; from another peeps the lurid cover of the familiar Baedeker; in another a French-Italian dictionary is concealed, and in his touring-bag there is the bulky tome of a complete Larousse Encyclopedia, in French, with illustrations. Of course, a man so well supplied with printed information is appointed guide and spokesman for the expedition. As a linguist he is a huge success. So perfect is his French that we are all set down as true Parisians; so fluent his Italian that when he speaks we almost hear the murmur of the river Arno; and then, most useful of them all, his Corsican dialect—created by carefully (or rather, carelessly) mingling the languages of Molière and Dante—wins for him instant favor with the natives.

We are scarcely out of Ajaccio ere our friend calls a halt, and bids us listen to descriptions of the scenery by German, French, and English authors. Yet had it not been for him, we should not have learned the interesting facts concerning a chateau which we discerned upon the slope of a neighboring mountain. It belongs to the great family of Pozzo di Borgo, one of the most influential of Corsica. It was a member of that family against whom Napoleon when a young man stood as candidate for the command of the National Guard. By forcibly seizing the person of the French election-commissioner in the very house of the di Borgos and conveying him to his own, Napoleon won the election, and made of his local adversary a lifelong enemy who in later years carried his vendetta into the great arena of European politics, and pursued the Emperor with relentless hate.



THE GROTTO IN THE CLIFF

The château, our friend informs us, is actually a part of the original palace of the Tuileries.

"What?" we exclaim, "the famous Tuileries of Paris?"

"Nothing less."

"But," we persist, "do you mean to say that the historic abode of Louis XVI, of Napoleon the First, Louis XVIII, Charles X, Louis Philippe, and Napoleon III, now stands upon a mountain-side in Corsica? Do you mean that the Palace of the Tuileries, burned by the Commune after the fall of Napoleon III and of which no vestige now remains in Paris, has, like Aladdin's palace, been transported to a far-off island?"

"Assuredly, I do. According to this trustworthy and accurate compendium of wisdom, the stones of one of the pavilions of the Tuileries were purchased by the Count Pozzo di Borgo, shipped to Ajaccio, hauled many miles over steep mountain-roads, and rebuilt there in full view of the city in which Napoleon was born. Thus the humble dwelling of the



OUR DEPARTURE FROM AJACCIO



A ROADSIDE REST.

boy Napoleon and the imperial palace to which he made his way over so many battlefields and through so many seas of blood, now stand on the same soil, and so close to each other that from the windows of the one the traveler may look down upon the tiled roof of the other!"

Filled with the thoughts aroused by this interesting information, we pedal away over excellent roads until an uphill stretch makes pedaling decidedly laborious. Then with resignation we dismount and walk. Our road does not at all times follow the Mediterranean shore. Instead it frequently cuts across the necks of the peninsulas, winding in splendidly-engineered curves up to some little village, thence descending to the sea, again remounting for many weary miles, only to grant us at the termination of each long climb a glorious descent which fully pays for all the labor. Our pictures may make it appear as if we were always upward bound; for we cannot bear to interrupt our birdlike flights to make photographs when we can see ahead five or six miles of perfect road, its downward grade just steep enough to

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UPHILL WORK

make our wheels give forth the fascinating whirring sound indicative of speed,—that sweetest of melodies to the cyclist's ear. We enjoy many amusing encounters. One day a cheery old teamster, meeting us at the top of a long ascent and noticing our thirsty look, puts on the brake and brings his huge wine cart to a standstill; then, producing a well-filled gourd, he bids us drink and gather strength for future climbs from the generous juice of the Corsican grape. We do full justice to the invitation. Meantime our host beams on us happily, and after we have handed back the empty gourd, he regales us with great chunks of bread and cheese.

Another teamster encountered farther on is a most surly fellow, and angrily resents our attempt to accustom his frisky mule to the sight of our bicycles. Our New York friend lingers behind in altercation with the irate driver; as he does not rejoin us, we begin to entertain fears for his safety, and turning back, coast downhill to his assistance. But when we meet the pair, we find that all our fears were groundless, for as the illustration proves, the relations between the driver and the cyclist are of the most cordial nature.

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A FRIEND IN NEED

Such was the wondrous power of our friend's polyglot eloquence that he could turn the anger of rude roadmen into kindness, for the man whose curses had followed us up and down two hills now insists that we shall pack ourselves and our wheels upon his cart and ride in lazy comfort to the summit of the third ascent. He will accept no pay, and thanks us for the honor of our company.

When we drop into villages as from the clouds, our arrival astonishes the natives — the hotel-keeper most of all! The village inns are managed apparently on the principle that the way to deal with customers is to send them on to the next town. We had been warned in Ajaccio always to telegraph ahead for meals, and we now learn the necessity of that precaution. At some of these "hotels" we find the larder absolutely void; not even the *odor* of food rewards our personal investigations in the kitchen. Meat, eggs — nay, even bread and water — must be sent out for, while we,



ASKING QUESTIONS



RECONCILIATED

the eggs without the charm of youthfulness, and the substance that was honored by the name of beef had not even the resiliency of a pneumatic tire.

On another occasion we found ourselves at dusk twenty miles from everywhere except a dingy inn of which every room was occupied by the landlord's family. It appeared that travelers usually passed on and halted not—a practice easily accounted for. The people, however, cheerfully vacated the front room, gave us one bed for our three tired selves, and tried to make us comfortable.

Upon arriving at a village we never failed to seek out the mayor and the Catholic *curé*, always the most influential persons of the place. Then our legal friend, gathering about him those dignitaries and assembling as many of the citizens as possible, would ask them to listen while he read aloud what his guide-books had to say about their town or village, begging them to suggest corrections if the information should

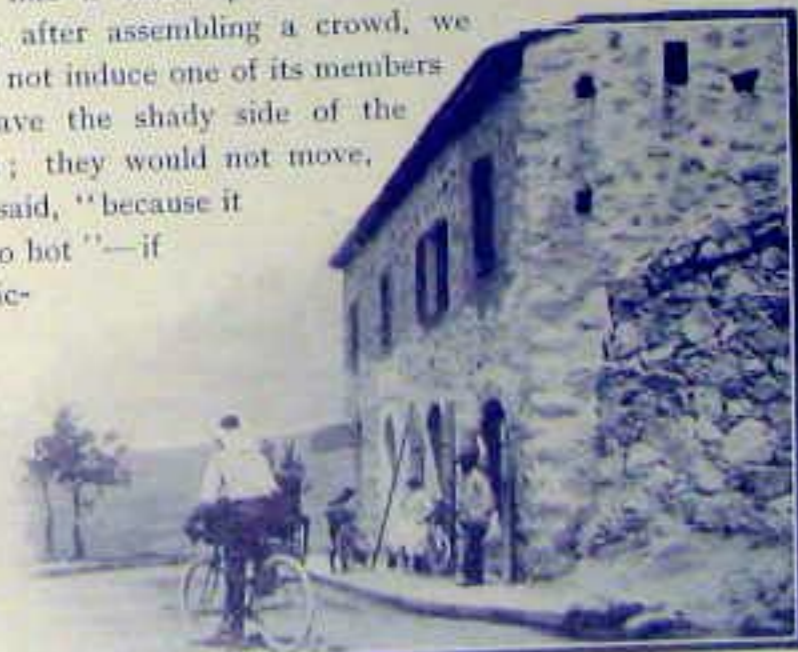
with forty-mile-uphill appetites, say things about this frugal island that are prompted by the demon of hunger unappeased.

Even the coffee must be purchased, roasted, ground, and prepared while famished travelers look on in desperation. One day we waited nearly three hours for a meal composed of coffee, boiled eggs, and stewed meat. The

coffee was without milk,

prove inexact. Then with much oratorical flourish he would improvise long paragraphs of praise in which their village was described as the most beautiful, most picturesquely situated, and most prosperous of all the island; its people, the most enlightened and refined; its officials, the most devoted of patriots; and more in the same tenor, while the big men of the place stood round and nodded proudly in confirmation of every flattering statement. The invariable result was an invitation to dine with His Honor the Mayor, or to sup with His Reverence the Priest.

By this time a veritable crowd would have assembled and our friend, not satisfied, would say, "Let's have 'em all out—the whole population!" and would subsidize small boys to go from house to house, telling the people to come to the town-hall where an American gentleman was about to make a photograph of all the inhabitants to be exhibited to millions of spectators in the United States. Usually we drew like a circus parade in a country town, but in one place, after assembling a crowd, we could not induce one of its members to leave the shady side of the street; they would not move, they said, "because it was so hot"—if the picture

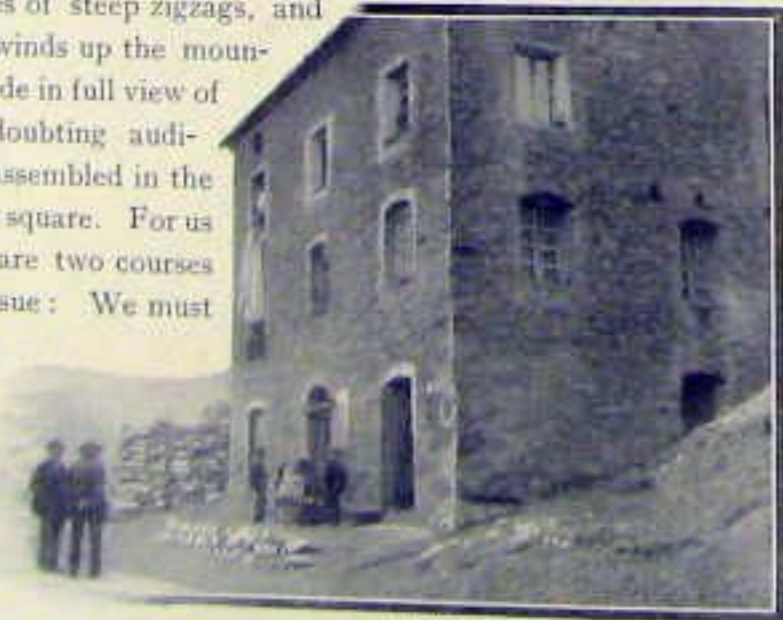


ARRIVING AT AN INN

could not be taken in the shade they begged to be excused.

As a rule, wherever we are, there is the entire population also. We are the greatest event of the season, nor does our greatness suffer in the mouth of our New York friend. The things he tells the poor credulous Corsicans about Americans and America are not always quite within the bounds of truth. Nevertheless, his words are seldom doubted. Once only did the seed fall on unreceptive ground. A little boy asked him how long it would take us to reach a town more than a hundred miles away. "About two hours," carelessly replied our thoughtless spokesman. At this the boy politely observed, "*Je suis Corse, mais je ne suis pas bête,*"—"I may be a Corsican, but I am not a fool."

Another day he assured the crowd that had assembled to witness our departure that we invariably ride up the steepest grades, that American cyclists accustomed to scorching over the passes of the Rocky Mountains find these little Corsican ascents of no consequence whatever. Just then we glance up and discover that our road leads out of the village in a series of steep zigzags, and then winds up the mountain-side in full view of this doubting audience assembled in the public square. For us there are two courses to pursue: We must



A TYPICAL HOSTELRY



MAKING COPPER

either drop dead in the square, or ride our heavily-loaded bicycles up that awful road and drop dead at the top. We resolve to do first and die afterward. With grim determination we begin the climb. The second turn is made successfully; the crowd below send up a cheer. Our wheels grow heavier with every revolution; we push and gasp and gasp and push, but every gasp is stronger, every push is weaker than the last. The end seems near.

"I see my finish," murmurs Ananias; but just as we are about to succumb, we pass a house that screens us from the crowd below and there we dismount *inseca*, to catch our breath. Then suddenly a bright idea occurs to our mendacious spokesman: "Suppose we ride when in full view of these admiring villagers, and walk when out of sight."

So up we go, triumphantly dashing over the short stretches which are exposed to view, but whenever a house, a hedge, a parapet, or a bit of rising ground conceals us, there we get off and push our wheels until, approaching



PROMINENT CITIZENS

another opening, we jump into the saddle and dash up a few yards of the ascent only to get off and walk as soon as we are out of sight again behind a welcome screen.

The audience is completely deceived by these maneuvers. Looking down from the last turn we see them cheering us on, firm in the belief that we have scaled the mountain-range without dismounting. Disgrace and ridicule await the future cyclist who cannot rival this epic feat of the American trio.

Thus, after three days of alternating toil and pleasure, we reach the place where the River of Porto meets the sea. We have passed at frequent intervals similar beaches, each lying at the mouth of some narrow valley which a few miles inland shrinks to a mere ravine or gorge between the mountain spurs thrown out at right angles to the great central chain. The lower extremities of the valley are usually fever-haunted, and the villages lying in them are every summer entirely deserted, the inhabitants fleeing inland to a healthier atmosphere. Every accessible point along the coast was in former days protected by a Genoese



TELLING ABOUT AMERICA



A CORSICAN GRANDMOTHER

watch-tower like that which we see on a rock below. If I were asked to designate Corsica's most characteristic feature, I should name these ruined towers which form a cordon of grim sentinels around the island coasts.

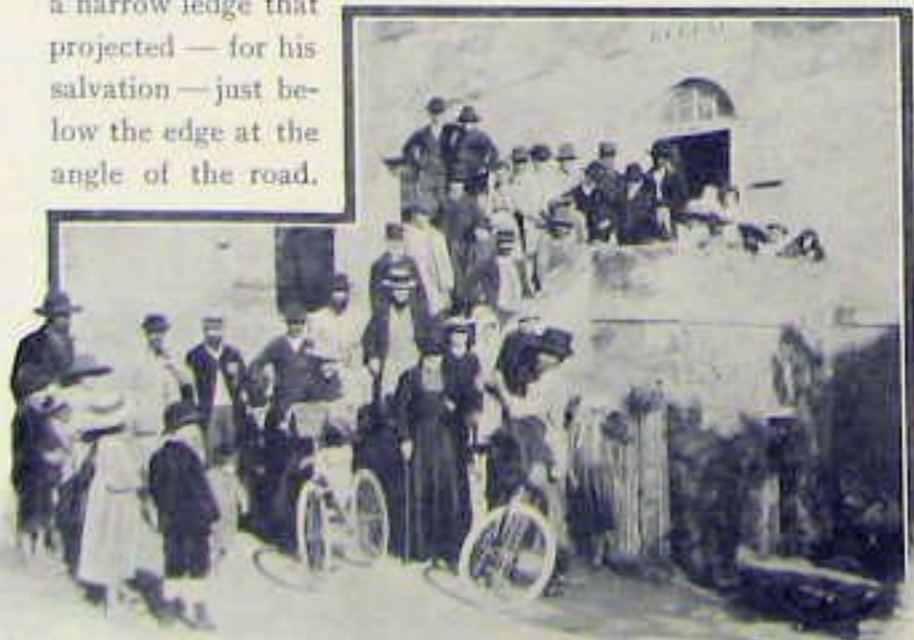
A Moslem host invaded Corsica shortly after Spain had been triumphantly overrun by the Prophet's armies. Although the Corsicans succeeded in driving out the African invaders, they were by no means rid of them, and for many years the coasts were ravaged by pirate fleets from Algiers. It was from

hundreds of these fortified watch-towers that the alarms were spread by signal-fires at the approach of the plundering expeditions of Algerines.

A curious tale is told of one Arsano, a Corsican renegade, who by a strange sequence of adventures rose to the throne of Algiers and became absolute ruler of the pirate nation which had so frequently ravaged his native land.

At Porto we turn inland and begin a climb of fourteen miles to the village of Evisa which is perched on the mountain-side, in sight of the sea, yet almost three thousand feet above it. The climb is, as you may imagine, an arduous one in spite of the excellence of the road. Above us tower two great peaks, the *Capo d'Orto* and *La Piannetta*. For five long hours we slowly climb skyward. Then, after an hour's rest at Evisa, we go gliding down the same road—so recently

conquered step by step—with an ease and speed that banishes the last vestige of fatigue. It took us five hours to ascend; the exhilarating descent from Evisa to the beach of Porto occupies less than fifty minutes, and could be done in far less time were it not for the necessity of putting on the brakes when rounding the turns of the steep zigzag road at points where failure so to do would send cyclist and cycle spinning into space. No wall nor parapet rises to separate us from the yawning depths, and despite our caution there occurs an accident which might have brought our Corsican excursion to a somber close. Our New York friend, approaching one of these sharp unprotected turns, tries to put on his brake,—it fails to check his fearful speed—he cannot catch the rapid pedals with his feet—he loses all control of the machine,—and, to our horror, plunges off into space! We stop as soon as possible, climb to where we saw him last, and find him safe and comparatively sound, nursing his bruises and scratches in a clump of bushes, on a narrow ledge that projected—for his salvation—just below the edge at the angle of the road.



THE FAREWELL COMMITTEE



RIDING "UP-TOWN"

Then, full of thankfulness, we dash away again, perhaps with less of abandon than before; but soon we forgot all danger in our admiration for the scenes that with the swiftness of snap-shots are revealed to us, then cut off from our view. And as the miles slip by, we are led by these fierce aspects of nature into a consideration of that passion for vengeance innate in the breasts of the inhabitants of this wild island. To the average person, as has been said, Corsica suggests two things — Napoleon's birth and the Vendetta. I came expecting to learn that the Vendetta was a thing of the past.

But the Vendetta still exists. According to its tenets, a man having killed one of his fellows is offered by the family



THE VALLEY OF PORTO

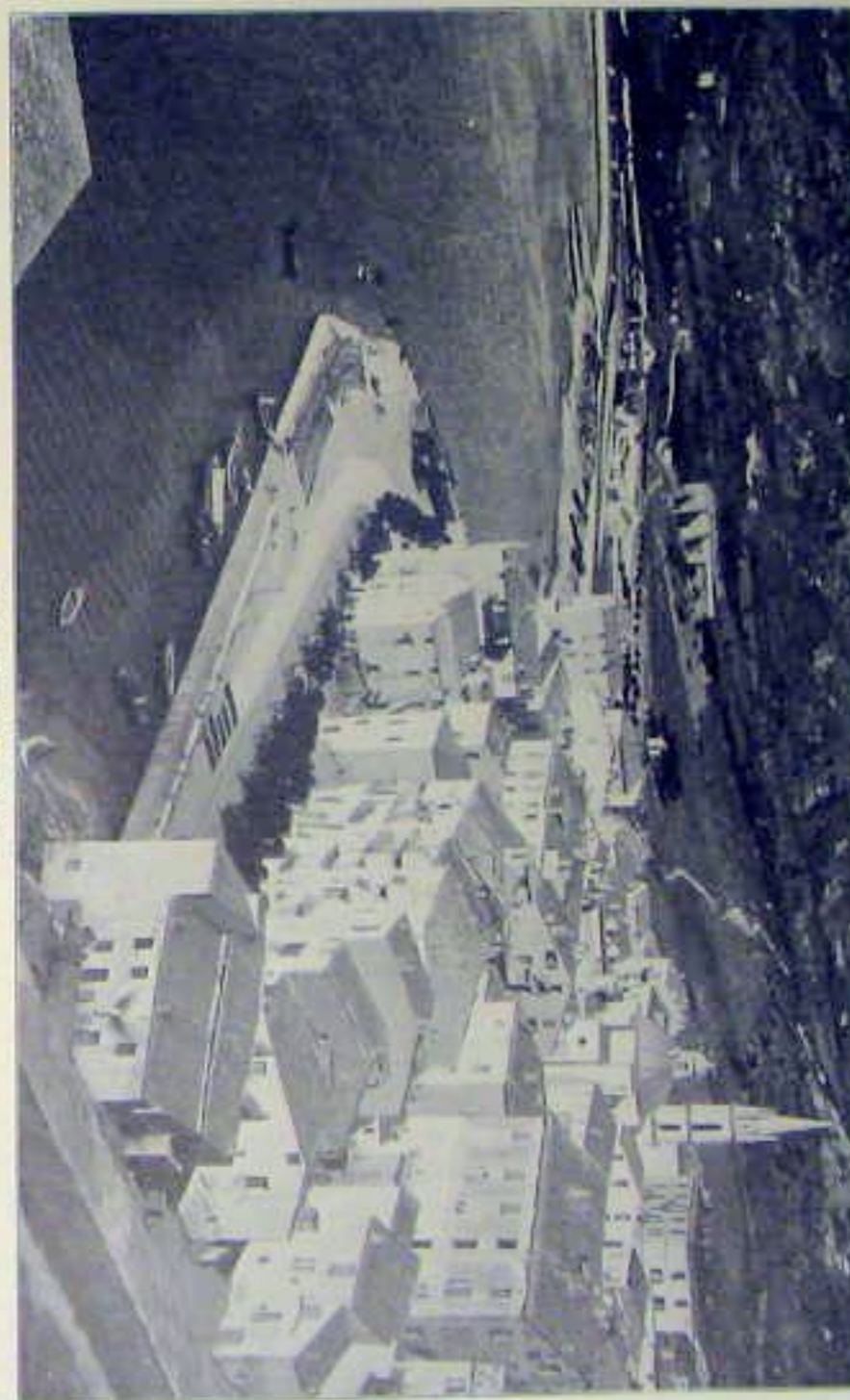
of the victim the choice of what are called the three "S's," "*Schiopetto, Stiletto, Strada*," or in English, "Shotgun, Stiletto, or Street," or in plainer words, to be shot, to be stabbed, or to scoot. If he does not choose the latter course, he prepares to defend himself; he barricades his house, and does not venture forth unless escorted by armed friends. Even so protected he is not safe from the attacks of enemies in ambush, for what was begun as a personal quarrel quickly becomes a war between two families, or possibly between two numerous and powerful clans. Every possible means of vengeance is resorted to, for the unwritten law

of the Vendetta countenances even the vilest means for the performance of what is considered by the Corsicans a sacred duty—the killing of the slayer of a kinsman. The Vendetta has been defined as "the art of obtaining justice without expense."

Let me now lead you into a region that forms an ideal setting for these bloody dramas of the Vendetta. It is known as "*Les Calanches*," a fantastic rocky solitude stretching along the



ON THE WAY TO EVISA



THE WESTERN COAST

western coast for several miles. Making an early start from a village high up in the mountain, we dash down in the morning coolness, and suddenly, almost without a warning, we round a bend and find ourselves confronted by scenes which only Dante could describe and Doré illustrate.

We are in a red-granite wilderness. Blood-red are the mountains, blood-red are the rocks. And here let me relate the story of a Vendetta— one that is typical of all.

It was between the families of Tafani and Rocchini. They belonged each to a different clan; this in itself is always an inevitable cause of dislike. In 1885 one of the Rocchini, called "*Animale*" or "the animal," on account of his brutality, found in a vineyard a dog belonging to the Tafani, and killed it. The owner, to avenge himself, killed a dog of the Rocchini. Thus far, dog-for dog. The affair, however, was but just begun.



AN EVENING

A few days later, Animale had a dispute with a Tafani clansman, and fired two rifle-balls into his back as the latter walked away. A woman who witnessed the crime revealed the murderer's name. Animale "took to the macchia"; his brother, fearing to be struck in his stead, joined him in the bush; both became outlaws.

The Vendetta was declared; all the near relatives on both sides were exposed, and sought safety by disappearing in the woods. The old father of the Rocchini, trusting in the protection of his white hairs, took no precautions; three Tafani clansmen fell upon him and killed him in cold blood—then took to the macchia in turn. It is easy for outlaws to conceal themselves in the close underbrush from both enemies and gendarmes. They amuse themselves by eluding the pursuit of gendarmes or by planning ambushes for their enemies in picturesque and savage regions like those through



WHERE GOOD BEARS ARE NEEDED



NEAR FURTO

which we are now riding. In time no fewer than twenty-four members of the two families involved in the Vendetta successively forsook the village to make war one upon another in the macchia.

Meantime the gendarmes opened a campaign against the warring clans, who had become a menace to the public peace. The soldiers planned ambushes, sometimes against the Rocchini with the aid of the Tafani, sometimes against the Tafani with the aid of the Rocchini,—for it is customary for either party of bandits to offer its services to the authorities to aid them in exterminating their adversaries. But in this Vendetta an unheard-of thing occurred. It so happened that on the same day, the first of June, while one part of the local brigade of gendarmes lay in ambush with the Tafani clan, the other half, ignorant of this fact, started on the war-path with the Rocchini family. The two parties met in the mountains. Thereupon the bandits dispersed, maliciously leaving the two companies of police to fight it out between themselves until the mistake was discovered. There was nothing

for the gendarmes to do but to bury their dead and hush up the affair.

Then, during the months that followed, the Vendetta was waged with unrelenting fury. Even the doctors who attended the wounded were included in it, and accordingly attacked. The property of the Tafani and Rocchini was neglected, their homes crumbled, their fields were gradually reclaimed by weeds and brush, their cattle ran wild, their two hundred pigs became as savage as wild boars and ravaged the vicinity—yet the villagers dared not interfere lest they be proscribed for meddling.

Not to detail further the murders and assaults committed, we find on the records that in eighteen months there were seven men killed, four wounded, one exiled, and twenty-four driven to the macchia and forced to become outlaws—all

as the result of the killing of a mongrel dog! And this is not a tale of many years ago. These events occurred in the eighties, and are with slightly varying details re-enacted every year. As we look off upon the Mediterranean whose waters bathe the feet of the blood-red cliffs of the Calanches, it does not require a great stretch of the imagination to look upon



IN A
GRANITE REGION



IL CAPO D'ORTO AND LA PIANNETTA

the redness of this region as the result of that flow of Corsican blood which has not been completely stanchd for centuries. When to the generous blood poured out in the cause of liberty we add all that which has been let in family feuds, in angry quarrels, in century-old Vendettas, it seems as if enough of that heroic fluid had been shed not only to stain this coast but even to change the color of the encircling sea.

Another long day in the saddle brings us to Calvi, one of the strongholds of the Genoese. It is now a place of exile for offenders from the French provinces in Africa,—Algeria and Senegal. It was into this impregnable city of Calvi that the forces of the tyrant republic retired whenever the smothered patriotism of the Corsicans flamed up and transformed

the island into a hotbed of revolt. Calvi held out even against the forces of the greatest of all the would-be liberators of Corsica, Pascal Paoli. Napoleon has said of him, "He fought and governed with a sagacity and tact that I have never seen in any other man." Paoli's father had been prominent in the patriotic councils of a previous



THE CORSICAN CORRIERE



A ROCKY ROAD

revolt, and, with his son Pascal, had been exiled to Italy. In 1755, Pascal, at the age of twenty, was called home by his countrymen to become their leader. He disembarked on the very spot where King Theodore had landed eight years before. He instantly won the confidence and favor of all. He was appointed to the highest military command, and thenceforth devoted himself to the great object of driving the Genoese from the island. He succeeded in penning them into their fortified seaport cities, but we can readily understand as we sail beneath the mighty walls of Calvi, he could not with his slender resources dislodge them from such fortresses. However, the interior of the island was swept of its oppressors, and Paoli, making his headquarters at Corte, began his wise dictatorship, which, to the lasting benefit of Corsica, endured for fourteen years. He endeavored to discourage the Vendetta, which was costing the nation more than eight hundred lives every year. Under his wise rule the land began at last to prosper. Genoa, then entering into her



THE CALANCHES



THE RED PORTAL

dotage, had in the meantime virtually turned these strongholds over to the French who agreed — for a consideration — to garrison the untaken fortresses and to preserve neutrality. Thus, with the coast towns held by France in the name of Genoa, Paoli perfected his democratic government in

the interior, and ruled the island wisely. Finally, on May 15, 1768, Genoa, weary of the hopeless occupation of the coast cities, deeded Corsica and the Corsicans to France in cancellation of the debt incurred to France who had held the strong places for Genoa. But France, on endeavoring to take possession of her newly-acquired province, found herself in a hornets' nest. The people rose; women in



AN ALGERIAN



AN EXILE FROM BENGAL

male attire fought in the patriot ranks. Even the seaport citadels were taken by the natives. Finally reverses came, Paoli's forces were defeated, and the great battle of Ponte Nuovo put an end to the first period of his career. He departed from his beloved island to spend twenty years in



ROUGH SAVAGE IN BOUM AND CILON

London as an honored exile, as the intimate of Johnson, Goldsmith, Reynolds, Burke, and Boswell, his biographer.

Recalled from exile in 1789, Paoli was requested by the National Assembly to direct the Revolution in his native island. His name became for a moment the most popular in Europe. He was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Corsica, and after twenty years of exile was escorted by a band of his



CALVI

happy countrymen back to his native land. His first act was to fall upon his face and kiss this soil consecrated by the blood of heroes. The Corsicans welcomed him enthusiastically, for his long absence had not diminished their adoration—he was still their idol, and never was a man more completely in possession of the hearts and minds of a whole people. The young Napoleon became one of his most devoted admirers, and eagerly sought a command in Paoli's Corsican Battalion.

Unfortunately, this harmony between the two greatest men of Corsica did not last; for Napoleon was an enthusiastic



MEDIEVAL MASONRY

champion of new ideas while the conservative Paoli was repelled more and more by the brutality of the revolutionists. He was accused even of a desire to separate Corsica from France, and was summoned to answer to the charge before the Convention. To go to Paris meant almost certain death to Paoli, for the guillotine was then at its hasty, thoughtless work, and the bravest heads of the nation were falling with the basest.

Paoli's refusal to appear before the Convention caused him to be denounced as a traitor. But in Corsica Paoli was all-powerful. Supported by his people, he declared the island independent, repudiated the Revolution, and placed Corsica and the Corsicans under the protection of the British crown.

The French, too busy on the continent, could not interfere. Napoleon had just defeated the English at the famous siege of Toulon, and the British fleet, which could no longer be of use along the coast of France, came hither to secure

the prize offered to England by Paoli. It was not to be easily won, for a powerful party, including the friends of Bonaparte, was loyal to France and to the Revolution. In July, 1794, the citadel of Calvi was bombarded.

Nelson was in command of England's fleet, and it was in this battle that the hero of Trafalgar lost an eye. England at last secured possession of Calvi, Bonifacio, and St. Florent, and for three years, from 1794 to 1797, Corsica was an English possession, Napoleon a British subject, and George III, King of Corsica.

Paoli, however, did not receive from the English the supreme command of the island which he considered as his due reward. Pained at this slight, he quarreled with the British Viceory, and his presence becoming irksome to the English,

he received what was politely termed an "invitation" from George III to visit London. The patriot left Corsica for the last time in 1795. Two years later the island was evacuated by the English and peacefully restored to France, and Paoli's visit thus became a second exile. He died in London, in 1807, at the



IN CALVI'S STREETS



THE WALLS OF CALVI

age of eighty-two, after having seen Napoleon, the son of his former secretary, mount the imperial throne. But in the hearts of his countrymen he still lives. They are proud of Na-

poléon, but they love Pascal Paoli. His history, like that of the other Corsican heroes, is passed down from generation to generation, and needs no written book to keep it fresh in the minds of this people for whose liberty he fought so long and so well. The peasants tell with admiration of the simplicity of Pascal Paoli's mode of life, even after his long sojourn amid the refinements of English

MAGNETERS
OF CALVI

ALONG THE WEST COAST

society. On his return from exile he found the windows of his old home glazed to keep out the cold mountain-air. With his stick he smashed the panes of glass to atoms, saying that he did not care to have in his father's house luxuries to which his brave ancestors had been strangers. They also point with pride to the facts that Paoli when dictator wore the dress of a native mountaineer, and kept the great seal of the nation in a cupboard; and that he would accept no title save the one imposed upon him by a loving people—the same that



A WINDSWEEP HIGHWAY

Americans have given to the noblest man in all our history—
“the Father of his Country.”

But while our thoughts have lingered on the past, our silent roadsters have borne us swiftly on to Cap Corso, the great northern peninsula of Corsica, which on the map looks like a mighty index-finger pointing Europeward.

All day we pedal along a rockbound coast, the road smooth as the surface of a billiard-table, now rising gently,



ST. FLORENT

now descending at the proper coasting grade. We pass innumerable ruined towers. There are eighty of those towers on the Cape, while a cordon of them stretches completely around the island. Many stand at the water's edge upon a level beach, others perch on dizzy pinnacles of rock above some village on a towering promontory. Every tower



ALONG THE WEST COAST

has its tale of heroism. The tower of Nonza was the last stronghold on the Cape to yield to the French, when in 1768 they took possession of the island. A brave young captain with a small garrison was stationed here. News came that every other fort had fallen. The garrison deserted, but the captain, a true Corsican, although left single-handed, prepared for the defense.

He loaded the cannon and trained them upon the approaches. He fixed loaded muskets in every loophole, and then he sat down to await the arrival of the French. They advanced in force to scale the rocks. The tower sent forth a storm of lead which quickly checked the enemy. An officer with a flag of truce was sent to offer generous terms to the unseen garrison. The Captain demanded the honors of war and stipulated for vehicles to convey away the arms and baggage of his troops. These conditions were granted, for the French feared to assault a tower at every window of which was seen a musket barrel or a cannon. The attacking



SARRE CAP CORSICA

force was drawn up to receive the "garrison;" drums rolled, trumpets sounded, the door swung open, and, to the amazement of the French, a garrison of *one man* marched out!—one little man, begrimed with smoke and powder, and from whose defiant eyes there flashed upon his enemies the unconquerable spirit of the Corsican.



TOWN AND TOWER

Leaving Nonza we laboriously climb toward a pass upon the crest of Corsica whence we look down upon two shores of the island, and then with feet upon the coasters begin another of those glorious descents—this one the last we shall enjoy in Corsica.

Mile after mile—turn after turn—and still the sea is many hundred feet below. We are dashing through the garden-spot of Corsica, the Vale of Luri, renowned for its

A CAP CORSO TOWN



mild air, its splendid vegetation, and the gentleness and hospitality of its people. It must have been when thinking of this region that Napoleon at St. Helena said, "Everything is better there, even the odor of the earth—blindfolded, I could recognize Corsica by its perfume alone." Here flourish the almond and the olive, the walnut and the chestnut; the latter in such abundance, not only here but everywhere in Corsica, that the government has seriously contemplated cutting down the trees to drive the people to agriculture, for the lazy Corsicans in some regions are content to live on the polenta made from chestnuts, which cost not even an effort, for they obligingly drop from the trees.

Our long descent is still unfinished when a sudden deep red glow warns us that the day is done, and that the sun has sunk to rest behind the mountain rampart which we have scaled since noon. Halting, we look up toward the pass



A HISTORIC RUIN

from which we have just swept down without a pedal-stroke; above it towers a pinnacle of rock upon the very top of which we recognize one of those ruined towers, inevitable in every Corsican landscape. That almost inaccessible pile is



THE TOWER OF SENECA

known as the Tower of Seneca, and there, according to tradition, the great philosopher and Stoic spent eight years of exile when under the Emperor Claudius he was banished from the Rome he loved so well. From this exile he was recalled to act as tutor to the youthful Nero, then eleven years of age; and in later years Seneca wrote an essay on a remarkable subject—for it was entitled "The Mercy of Nero,"—the mercy of the man by whom he was at last con-

demned to die! He died, you will remember, Stoic to the last. Accused of conspiracy, sentenced to suicide, he made suggestions in regard to desired changes in his poems, supped sumptuously, opened his veins and calmly bled to death.

But we must hasten or night will overtake us in the highlands; hence let us—giving free rein to our steeds of steel—dash down the remaining miles through this lovely Vale of Luri now gloriously transfigured by the setting sun, and hasten southward toward Bastia, our destination, for our cycle tour of Corsica is drawing to a close. And in parting



THE VALE OF LURI

what shall we say of these brave Corsicans? We can but call them brave, for like the hero of the Tower of Nonza they have always been outnumbered, never fairly beaten. Had they been as eager to conquer as they were fiercely resolved

not to submit, the history of Corsica would not be that of a mere island-province, the toy of foreign tyrants, but that of a free and masterful nation whose people, properly directed, would have overrun and conquered Europe. But although Corsica did not conquer Europe, Europe was conquered by a Corsican. Napoleon amply avenged the wrongs of Corsica upon the nations that had oppressed her in the past.

Farewell, O Corsica!—thy glory is that thou art mother of brave men!





