and spiritual virgin of Corsica, who clung to the religion of our Saviour through all the Pagan persecutions. Her purity of life, her self-abnegation, her firmness when urged on pain of death to deny her faith and bow before the deities of Rome, would make her sainted in any calendar. She was ordered to execution by the Roman magistrates of Corsica. In dying, she committed her soul to the Saviour, and in the article of death a dove was seen to ascend from her mouth to the sky. Some Christians took her body, bore it to a bark, and sailed with it toward Africa. She appeared to them, and persuaded them to take the body to that place whither the dove should fly from her mouth on the voyage. This proved to be Monaco, and they followed her direction; bore the body to Monaco, and buried it near where now is the Church of St. George; and there it remains. In view of the licensed hells of the principality, one would think it would hardly rest here in peace!

CHAPTER IV.

CORSICA AFAR AND NEAR.

'Is this the man of thousand thrones,
Who strewed our earth with hostile bones?
And can he thus survive?'

BYRON'S 'Ode to Bonaparte.'

'CORSICA!' 'Corsica!' 'L'île de Corse!' These and other like exclamations sprang to the lips of many visitors at Monaco, in the afternoon of February, 1869, while the writer was sojourning in that little realm. The occasion was the uprising of Corsica from the bluest of blue seas. To our vision the island was nigh, but in fact it was a hundred miles away. Our point of view was the far-famed, if not ill-famed, Casino.

Certainly, the hundred gamblers of both sexes—some of whom were princesses, and some of the *demi-monde*; some English millionaires, and some Russian nobles—were all intent on the *rouge et noir* until the cry went up, 'Corsica!' 'Corse!' from the windows of the Casino, where a company were gazing seaward. A rush, a lifting of the hands and eyelids, exclamations of delight; and soon Corsica is forgotten by the gambling throng. Not so by the writer. He resolved to enter upon, *pedis possessio*, the promised land.

I have said that the isle which we saw was over a hundred miles off. From the French coast it is only ninety; but the grand mountain range which we had seen was distant 120 miles. Its base was

concealed below the horizon. The sphericity of the earth sinks about 3000 feet of Corsica from the eye. Therefore, in order to obtain a view of the Corsican coast, with its serrated ridge of mountains on the extreme edge of the sea, you must 'rise to the occasion' by an ascent either in a balloon, or to the higher points of the Maritime Alps—at the back of Nice, Mentone, Cannes, Monaco, or some other part of the Riviera. From the top of the Turbia or the Berceau, immediately behind Mentone, and to which the imperturbable donkey makes his adventure daily, the coast itself of Corsica may be seen when the isle is visible. Below, on a fair day and under favourable conditions, are seen the higher inland peaks of Corsica, Monte Rotondo, Monte D'Oro, Monte Cinto, and others, ranging from 8000 to 9000 feet high.

The newspapers of the Riviera were full of admiration for the splendid view we had enjoyed. The oldest inhabitant had not seen Corsica so plainly. Some even thought that they had seen through the island into Monte Christo, Dumas's pet, and some into Elba; but these were enthusiasts, who have second sight! Generally Corsica does not honour the continent with a view more than once a month; and that too, most vividly, just after the sun rises. That orb, of course, is at first behind the granite mountains of the island. Being on the move, he surmounts them; and lo! they die out of our vision as soon as he rises above them. Still, even when Corsica is not seen from the continent, one may discern where it is. Clouds, by a law of their own, are anchored over the splendid mountains. They are as immoveable as if they were not vapour. There are conditions when mountains 'melt like mist and solid lands, like clouds they shape themselves and go.'

Here there is a reversal of this law of the poet and philosopher. The granite of eastern Corsica seems to have been frozen in fire, and unmelted by the ages. The clouds this evening as they are piled in grand, solemn, heavy, golden, orange and red masses, have all the moveless massiveness of a mountain's gravity. I do not know how it would impress others; but if a New York citizen, with a dash of poetry in him, from the top of Trinity steeple, or higher, could get a glimpse of the White or Alleghany Mountains, or an Englishman from Dover cliffs could discern Mount Rosa or Blanc, the effect could not be more mysterious or charming, especially if those mountains were tipped or streaked with silver snows! It is this charm or mystery that prompted me thitherward. But, being under medical care, I had to obtain medical consent. On consulting my physician, and afterwards our companion in travel, Dr. Henry Bennet, he at once gave consent. In fact, if you will read his book on 'Winter in Southern Europe,' you will see that Corsica, as a health station, or sanitarium, had already been observed by him on his own travels. What deductions he makes from his observations, the reader will perceive by the perusal of his volume. But of this hereafter. Enough that we had our doctor's cheerful advice. With it he gave us many letters to medical friends at Ajaccio, Bastia, &c., and, all alive to the trip, we started from Mentone for Monaco, where we took the cars in the afternoon for Nice. At seven in the evening we were aboard the steamer 'L'Industrie,' ready to plough toward that isle where Ulysses once found a harbour —where Seneca found his exile so irksome—where the European world found Napoleon, and—to descend from the great to the small—where a beautiful morning, in early March, found the writer.

Corsica is out of the route of European travel. It has not been written up or down. It is one of Bayard Taylor's 'Bye Ways' of travel. The very fragrance of the isle—the product of its uncultivated lands—has preserved it from the curiosity and vandalism of common travel. A few Americans, a few English, and a few French, on business, or for sporting, or health, have come to Corsica within a year or so; but their sojourn is confined to Ajaccio, or to a race across the island in a diligence to Bastia. As it takes twenty-four hours to cross the island, the tourist confines himself to gazing out of his coupé or sleeping through the romantic and variegated mountain and coast scenery.

I am afraid that I cannot adequately convey my impressions of this island. I must content myself with a few pictures of the land and people, not omitting some of the experiences of travel and some historic associations.

First, to get here. We found a neat and dashing steamer ready for us at Nice on Wednesday for its weekly visit to the island. The sun was going down over the range of the Estrelles, near Cannes, as we clambered up the gangway. Two ladies were along with me. Between us three, however, we commanded four languages—English, French, German, and Italian. The Italian was altogether the most useful. The people on the Corsican mountains leap to hear it from a stranger. It is indispensable in Corsica. The Corse tongue is very near Tuscan. It is mixed Arabic and Italian. It is a patois, but an Italian can comprehend it. A strange-looking gentleman, with broad-brimmed hat, knee breeches, and long dark robe, accompanied us in our boat from the shore to the steamer. Who was he? He talked French, looked like a Greek priest, and acted like a gentleman. I

had a note to the Bishop of the English Church of Gibraltar. I wonder if it be he. I make bold to ask. He is happy to say that his church *is* founded on that rock; but his diocese runs to Constantinople. He is about to go to Corsica, where a church of his persuasion is about to be inaugurated. He proves an agreeable companion. We need some cheer. The rain begins to dampen the deck before we sail; but soon the stars appear, the moon struggles through the clouds; the dark mountains above us on the shore lose some of their gloom. The clear obscure of the night is gilded by the glancing lights from the long line of gas jets along the Promenade des Anglais at Nice. Further out, as we enter upon the open sea, the glaring and meretricious lights of that bold, but not big nation of Monaco, are reflected upon the waves and broken into myriads of sparkles. Soon the terrestrial lights give way to the celestial luminaries, and we give way to sleep.

We awake in the morning at seven, after a nap of twelve hours, within an hour of the north-west coast of Corsica. We are opposite to Calvi; but our vessel, for nautical reasons, to avoid the rough sea, hugs the coast. It thus gives us a near view of its crested white mountains, the macchie covered land, the chestnut, olive, and orange-clad valleys and hills, and the wonderful fringe of white breakers foaming among the rocky indentations, whose peaks are decorated with the old Genoese towers. At first the island reminded me of the Archipelago of Greece. It looked so nude and rocky—destitute and deserted. The scenery was thoroughly Alpine, back from the sea. The interior seemed one magnificent range of mountains. No plains, no marshes were visible. Corsica has two ranges of mountains. You never lose sight of its primitive granite. It begins near the

coast at Isola Rossa, and bounds upward 8000 feet, and 'keeps it up,' longitudinally, the length of the island, which is 150 miles. The eastern range is secondary and calcareous, like the mountains along the coast of France and Italy. The granitic range has not been washed away to any perceptible extent. Its grand, grotesque, and imposing forms—twisted and writhed by the fires which heaved them from the ocean—are to-day as they were countless ages ago. The eastern range has been worn. Some alluvial and unhealthy plains have resulted. Brackish ponds and deadly malaria are incidents of the autumn on the eastern side of the island, but not the western. Hence, the western side has been selected by eminent physicians for health stations. The mountains, especially around Ajaccio, shelter that city; and the weak in throat and lung find relief, and often cure.

But I anticipate. We have not yet landed. Nor yet have we reached Ajaccio. First, we must pass within thy gates, Sanguinaires! In which apostrophe I allude to two or three, or more picturesque islands, almost mere rocks, called Sanguinary (wherefore called I cannot guess), which guard the outer harbour. These rocks are neither red nor bloody, but grotesque and brown, and were under a white veil as we approached. The sea covered them with the finest spray from the breakers, which howled among their caves, and hallooed, over their sides. Passing between them the sea is calm at once, as if by magic, and the air is balm. The fine bay of Ajaccio is spread out to the view. It is surrounded on every side by mountain ranges. Many parts are snow-covered, and their sides checkered by shade and sun. There are few houses or villas to be seen. The bay reminds me of the bay of Naples. Others say, it recalls Lugano, in Switzerland; and some, that it reminds them of

Irish scenery. I cling to Naples as the best known portraiture of the features of the bay. If the shores were not so desolate the resemblance would be more striking. The air was balm; not alone, because the exposure was to the south-west, and the bay was so inland as to be protected from the mistral or sea breezes; but because the atmosphere was freighted with the perfume of the mountains. Will my readers in New York, which is on the same parallel of latitude as Corsica, believe that here, at 42° north latitude, the very weeds are the fragrant flowers of the New York conservatory! The very scrubs are the sweet-scented shrubs of the lady of the Fifth avenue! Even the winter air is redolent with a burden of lemon, orange, and myrtle aroma, for which Arabia has no parallel in summer, and the mind of the stranger no conception till he inhales it. Do you remember what Napoleon said, from his rocky island prison of St. Helena? '*A l'odeur seule je devinerais la Corse, les yeux fermés.*' Now, as I write, in the afternoon, in a villa with open window, with a gentle breeze blowing across the bay from the sea, and towards Corte, the realization of Napoleon's words is faithful to satiety. The heraldic bearing on the shield of Corsica once was a Saracen's head, with eyes bandaged. It seems as if there were here such an affluence for one sense, that sight was superfluous. Besides, we have nightingales in plenty, whose song is fragrance to the ear.

As we ploughed up the bay, we asked one of the passengers the question asked by many a stranger before: 'What are those beautiful little houses, so oddly made, lining the shore?' 'These are the villages of the dead.' The dead lived in these towns, as an Irish friend afterwards remarked about these mortuaries. Cemeteries there are none, or but few. These

few are not attractive to the living; hence these private burial houses. The funeral custom of the public cemetery here is repulsive. The grounds are poorly kept. The graves are in the form of long trenches, to be filled up from time to time. The coffin is brought into an adjacent church. A crowd attends, with one or two priests; the latter utter a few words, and go off. The coffin is then hurried, on a trot, Mahomedan fashion, to the grave—the crowd following. It is dropped in a hurry. A rush to the town, with great disorder and noise. So concludes the ceremony. No wonder that private burial is preferred. While among the mountains we found many of these odd places of domestic sepulture. Each family which can afford it, has a private mausoleum. It is nothing here to decorate the little garden around the tombs. The cypress, evergreen flowers, and shrubs, which no winter strips of foliage or fragrance, by their own energy of vegetation, and without even the care of the bereaved, preserve in picturesque and perpetual sweetness, mournful memories of the loved and lost.

But our vessel moves on. Soon we are at the place of landing. There are no docks. The anchor is dropped. A throng of boats surrounds the vessel. It seems as if there were 500 people on the shore—an eager group. We are the objects of scrutiny and sympathy; the sympathy has some reference to baggage; for while no carriage, dray, or wheeled vehicle, not even a wheelbarrow is visible, there are plenty of lazy-looking people ready to carry, for a sou or so, our 'traps' to the hotel. We walk up the leading street, past the allegorical monument upon which Napoleon I. stands in marble, draped in a toga. Around it are some score of women. From the spouting mouths of the four lions at its base

they are filling their earthen jars with water. They form quite a classic group of antiques, but would look better if they were not so dirty. We have but little leisure to admire them in their mandiles and fandettas, as the immediate question is—who shall get to the best hotel first. Accommodations are limited, and on steamer days especially so.

One thing the stranger, even on the most superficial glance, will notice—not the street, with double rows of orange-trees for shade; not the little railroad, carrying stone to the shore for the jetty in process of construction, followed by a small boy to blow a horn—but the signs, emblems, and influences pervading the town. Bonapartism is the presiding genius of the place. Ajaccio would not be accounted much, except for its bay and healthy situation, were it not the birthplace of the most remarkable man of the past thousand years. It has a fine gallery of paintings; but that is a gift of one of the Napoleonic connections, Cardinal Fesch. It has a beautiful marble chapel; but that is a mausoleum of the Napoleon family. It has an old cathedral, where Madame Letitia was accustomed to take the young Bonaparte to mass. It has some fine villas; but chief among them, which we visited, was that of the Princess Bacciochi (still Bonaparte), which that lady, just dead, has bequeathed to the young Prince Imperial. All the streets bear Napoleonic names. The cafés, also, are named after Jerome, or some others of the family. There is a street called after the King of Rome. But chief among the souvenirs of the great family is the house where Napoleon was born. It is situated next door to a hatter's. I looked in upon the hatter at his work; looked through the grated windows of his workshop, and there, unconscious of his ennobling proximity, he was beating away at his trade.

The house where so many princes of the earth first drew breath is next door to a hatter's! 'We shall all meet at the hatter's,' saith the homely proverb. But let me be more precise.

Passing up a narrow street in the heart of the town, you come upon the Place Letitia; then upon a little open spot, ornamented with tropical palms, shrubs, and flowers. This plot was opened and enlarged by the mother of Napoleon, by tearing down a house in front of her own. She used the house on the left side of the plot as a stable and coach-house. The woman who showed us the premises was formerly a waiting-woman of Caroline Murat. She lives in the old stable opposite the hatter, which is neatly fitted up. Upon the front of the Bonaparte mansion there is an inscription, that within this house Napoleon was born. It gives the date, the 15th of August; so that if tablets of stone are evidence, as they often are, according to Greenleaf, of old dates and events, here is a record to satisfy enquiry, or rather to provoke more discussion as to the great day, so soon to be celebrated on its hundredth round. The house is large—four stories—and of stone, evidently one of the best of its day. It is hardly excelled, even yet, in Ajaccio. It shows that the family were 'well-to-do' in the world. In fact, Madame Letitia's family (the Ramolinis) were rich, and had many estates upon the island. When she died, she bequeathed her furniture to members of her family. The present Emperor has collected most of the articles, and replaced them in the house which he now owns. Our conductress told us what each object meant, and whose room this, that, and the other was. The second floor was Madame's bed-chamber, dining-room, and salon,—quite commodious. The floor above it was devoted to the sons. Here was Napoleon's room and his

bureau! Yonder, Joseph's! There Jerome's! The floor above that for the boys was occupied by the daughters. There was a very small terrace looking out from the reception-room, with flowers in pots—all in bloom. This reception-room contained five little square mirrors, as high as your head, running down each side; three other mirrors near them, and one grand mirror at either end of the room. In fact, we counted some fifteen mirrors in this room. The Napoleons were well provided with looking-glasses. We cannot say as much for any of the other houses we have seen. What effect these mirrors had upon the young Napoleon,, I will leave, with other *reflections* to the reader. Two brackets for wax tapers hung below each little mirror. The ceiling was ribbed. It had been newly plastered, with some little effort at fresco. The mother's portrait, very finely executed, hung over her dressing-table. It presents her as a splendid woman. The cabinets were inlaid with every-coloured marble, and very antique. Some rare objects sent by Napoleon from Egypt were displayed.

But the chief attraction was the bed on which Napoleon was born! It is a wooden, rickety affair; near it is the sedan-chair of the Madame. It is well-known;—well I will put it—politely—in French, that —Madame Letitia *surprise à l'église par les douleurs de l'enfantement le* 15 *Août*, 1769, *fut rapportée a son domicile!* In this very sedan the mother of the great Emperor was borne from the church, and on this very couch, the 'little corporal' first drew his breath. From this bed to St. Helena; from the capitol to the Tarpeian Rock! Fill up the gap—Arcoli, Austerlitz, Waterloo! Here, in this house, he passed his time, playing at soldiers with his fellows, and mourning because he had no moustache—till, at the age of fifteen, he entered the Military School

at Brienne. He returned home for vacations, and mixing his young ambitions with the daily round of boyhood pleasures and walks, he, at the same time, imbibed from the peculiar characteristics of the Corsicans, those feuds and feelings, which his grand, gloomy, and marvellous after-life illustrated.

Just above where we lodge, at the end of the avenue—where, if you go, you may probably see a company of lively ladies and gallant officers playing croquet—is a grotto (of which I present a sketch) formed by boulders, and surrounded with foliage, and musical with birds, celebrated as the favourite study-spot of the young Napoleon. The grotto commands a beautiful view of the bay and the snow-clad mountains around. From it can be seen on a clear day, the island of Sardinia. Gardens of oranges, from which we are permitted to pluck at pleasure, cover the slopes near. Hedges of cactus (cactus opuntia) —cactus piled on cactus; the famous macchie, so sweetly scented; the arbutus, the myrtle, the olive, and every kind of tree and colour of flower, grow in the air of winter. It was within the circle of such influences of sun, sky, land, and water, that the young Napoleon formed his plans of life. How many of them failed, or how many of them were realized, we can only guess. One thing remains to be said: that in the hurly-burly of his active career he never forgot Corsica. He always intended to do more for her than he did. His last thoughts were about his native isle.

In Ajaccio, you cannot escape the Napoleonic impressions. They follow you whenever you go out; and they enter with you into every public place. If you go to the Hôtel de Ville, which contains a library of historical interest—at least to the Bonapartes—you will see the picture of a lawyer—Carlo Maria

Bonaparte. He is a handsome man, of elegant appearance, fit to be the bridegroom of the belle of Ajaccio —Letitia Ramolino; and fit—if any body is fit—to be the father of Kings and Queens. Go into the Collège Fesch—named in honour of Letitia's half-brother—and you will find the pictures once owned by the Cardinal, and presented by Joseph Bonaparte as lately as 1842; and in the library, a bronze of the Cardinal. If you would see the tombs of the Cardinal and his half-sister, you will go to Rome for them in vain. They were removed to Ajaccio. The remains of Madame Letitia repose, beside her brother, in the vault of the chapel in the Rue Fesch, near the College. The Cardinal began the chapel, and Napoleon III. finished it in 1859. It is a stone building in the form of a cross, with a dome over it. The inscription in Latin over the tomb of Letitia is 'Mother of Kings!' Everywhere in Ajaccio, among living and dead, Napoleon the Great appears. He may have been the Prometheus of Byron's ode, chained to the rock, or like that Tartar prince, caged; or so much worse than Charles V., that he took a throne, instead of abdicating one; but Byron's muse failed in her vaticination. Whatever the premises may be, the conclusion is not verified:—

> 'If thou had'st died as honour dies,
> Some new Napoleon *might* arise.'

A group of kings may be seen upon the fine, roomy, open plaza, called the Place Bonaparte. Here the first object that arrested my attention, after I emerged from the hotel, on our arrival, was an equestrian bronze statue of Napoleon—colossal and grand. At the four corners of the monument—*on foot and below*, and draped in Roman vestments, are his four brothers. They all look off to the sea, as if they

were in, but not of, Corsica; as if their musings were pre-occupied with other lands. This fine memorial was dedicated by Prince Napoleon in 1865. He made, on its inauguration, a fierce democratic oration, which gave offence, as it was alleged, to the Emperor.

In glancing at Ajaccio, I have thus far written the impressions of one or two days' sojourn only. I shall return to it again after our visit to the interior, whither I am about to take the reader in the next chapter.

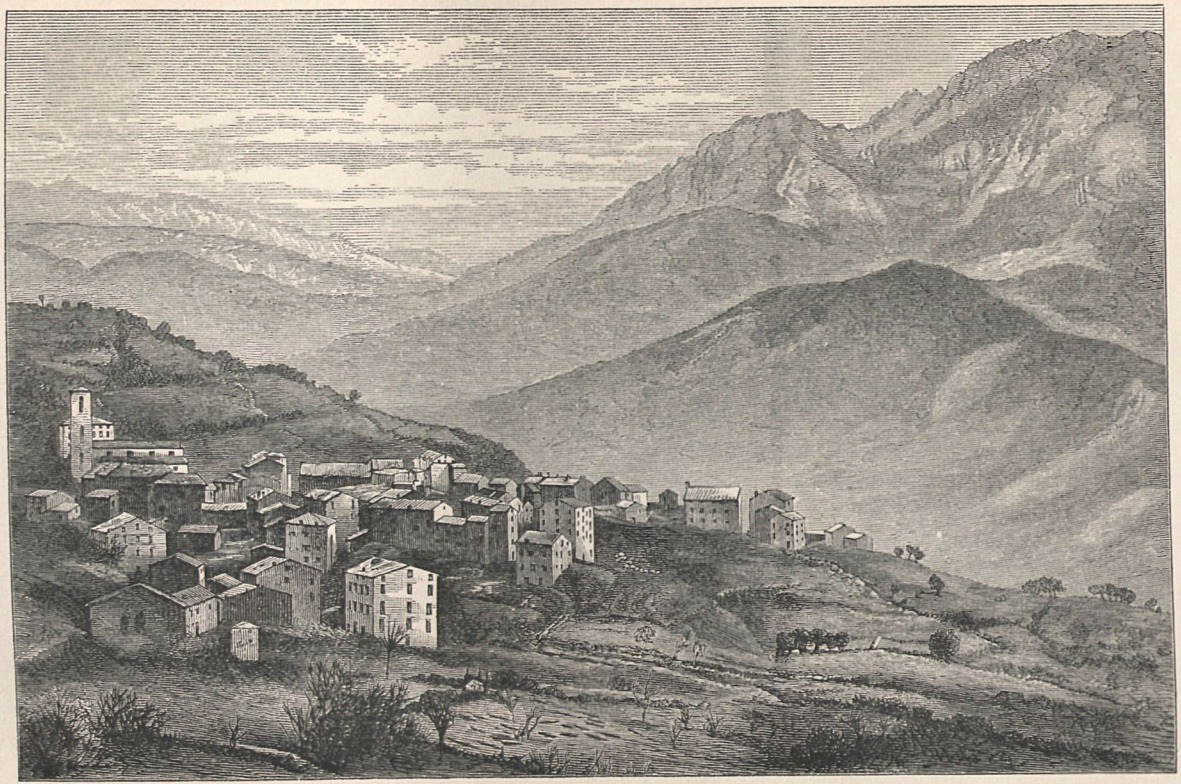
CHAPTER V.

AMID THE MOUNTAINS OF CORSICA—A STRANGE, WONDERFUL LAND.

'By anemone and violet
Like mosaic, paven:
And its roof was flowers and leaves
Which the summer's breath enweaves,
Where nor sun, nor showers, nor breeze,
Pierce the pines and tallest trees.
Each a gem engraven,
Girt by many an azure wave.'—SHELLEY'S 'Isle.'

IT will require a long chapter to describe, even compactly, the views, experiences, and impressions of our four days' visit amidst the mountains around Vico, Corghese, and Evisa—amidst rain and snow, sunshine and cloud; among forests of pine and ilex (live oak); everywhere the everlasting evergreens and efflorescence of Corsica. A strange, wonderful land—half Oriental; tropical, yet with snow-clad mountains; so wild in parts that the wild boars and wild sheep are hunted in forests where the pines grow 30 feet in circumference; so tame and sweet in parts that even the macadamized roads are covered with the sweetest and smallest clover; so sea-surrounded that at no point do you escape the impression of the mobile element; so grand in its mountains that the Alps scarcely surpass it in magnificence.

I am free to confess, that during this fascinating journey I forgot that my search was for Sunbeams. Reaching a wintry altitude, it seemed that the nearer



YICO---CORSICA.