talked, enamoured and enamouring. They chatted of the terrible Serafino. I need not say that the soldier and Serafino were one. He saw her home—her and her donkey—but the maiden 'ne'er' saw him more. She pined in monotones of lamentation for the love of her brigand! There! is not that a pretty story by whose music to awake in a region so renowned in brigandage? By the way, the last story told of Serafino has its scene near Ajaccio, on the road to Sartene. A captain of gendarmes was traversing Campo di Loro on a pony. He was overtaken by a peasant on foot. The officer dismounted to fix the girth of his saddle. The peasant, allowing the sun to glance upon his dagger, civilly remarked, pointing to his own boots, 'Are these fit for Serafino?' Exit Serafino on a pony. Exit officer, bootless!

Since penning the above, I have heard the songs of the Moors and the Spaniards. I declare that the similarity of tone, the drawl of lamentation, the soul of sorrow, which follows my memory of Algiers and Andalusia, seem but the echoes of the lyrics of Corsica? Have the Saracens set the Mediterranean to a music of their own?—These voceros, are they the language of the dead nations, whose ghosts haunt the shores of this historic and poetical sea?

Most of these *voceros* are laments over those slain in family feuds. They are the poetry of La Vendetta. Happily for Corsica, this barbarous system of rude justice is nearly extinct. Its principal seat was in the centre of the island, around Sartene, Vico, and Corte. Persons are known to have been shut up for years, close prisoners in their own stone houses, with only shot-holes open; the windows being stuffed with mattresses. The prisoner was always on guard for his life, from the bullet. His relatives

tilled his land, or cared for his flocks, but did it under sentinel. There are instances where men have lived in this self-immured jail for a score of years. In 1853 the Government forbade the carrying of arms, in order to suppress this system, but the prohibition failed. Then the system of mounted mountain-police was established. It has done much to eradicate the evil. The Catholic priesthood and religion have been more efficient agents of reconciliation. I heard of many instances where these agents were of inestimable utility. The law of revenge is so alien to the spirit of Christian kindness, that to establish the latter is to extirpate the former. At Sartene there had been a feud between the Rocca Serra and the Ortoli families since 1815. This feud grew out of political differences. One clan called themselves White Bourbonist, and the other Red Republican. When Napoleon became Prince President, a public reconciliation took place, and the children of the two houses, in happy innocence, were allowed to dance together! With the extirpation of La Vendetta brigandage dies, as the brigand is not so much a robber as an outlaw. He is driven to the rocks and mountains because the avenger of blood or the Government has been on his track. Strangers are not in any danger from the brigands of the isle, if any remain. The principal cause of these vengeful raids and murders is the old passion—love. An insult or a wrong to a female relative, and La Vendetta takes it up. Often the woman herself, with her bright, little, pointed dirk, with *Vendetta* burned on one side, and *Mort* on the other, pursues her vengeance, like a fury, to the 'sticking point.'

Sometimes there is a comic side to these feuds. On the eastern side of the island, the inhabitants of two villages were celebrating a religious *fête*. Their pro-

cessions became confused by the carcass of a dead donkey in the way. The inhabitants of each village accused those of the other of placing it there as an insult. A mortal enmity and stubborn conflict ensued. The two towns, Borgo and Lucciana, were held in blockade by each other. The contest was, who should keep the carcass. The donkey did more travelling in that asinine war than when in full sonorous life. It was carried from village to village with many sanguinary conflicts. Once Borgo placed it in the church door of Lucciana, and once Lucciana hung it as a trophy on the steeple of Borgo! Finally, to prevent further bloodshed, the Mayor of Lucciana 'digged a pit,' and hid therein the *teterrima causa belli*. A burlesque poem has been written to celebrate this war of the donkey. How much moral there is in the lesson, for nations outside this fragrant island!

The lament of the crone did not awake me at the hotel. I was already awake. It saluted my aroused sense. Other lively matters surround the traveller in the Corsican mountains besides vociferating females and supposititious bandits. If the fleas were only as harmless as the brigands are now-a-days in Corsica travelling here would involve less trouble. Our Italian companion was frequently heard to ejaculate, with polyglot volubility, during the night, from her populous couch, '*Mon Dieu!*' '*Sapristi!*' '*Ach! Der Deufel!*' '*Corpo di Bacco!*' '*Zounds!*'

Morning comes. The lament had hardly ceased, before it seemed as if all the population were out and about. The bells begin to ring. The chickens in the house begin to crow and cluck. The donkeys begin their dissonant noises. The interminable chatter of voices is heard in the street below. We could not sleep, even if fleas were not; so we arise and walk out to find some cigars. We find them in a

shoemaker's shop; his wife makes them herself. We perceive upon the piazza—40 by 60 feet—about two dozen of the principal citizens—including the Mayor and the travelled man. They are walking by sixes backwards and forwards, and talking very loud, as if they were all mad. They lift their caps altogether, and the travelled man astonishes his companions and myself by saying 'Good-bye' for 'Good morning!' I passed round the cigars. They were received with exemplary politeness. After breakfast they came to see us off, the kind priest among them, and we were soon upon the high-road, flying down and toiling up the mountains which skirt the coast. Relics of the Moorish invasion and of Genoese rule—old castles and towers of look-out—cap the pinnacles along the sea. Soon we reach the 'Plain of Silver.' It was so named because richly cultivated with flax and barley, olive and vine, sheep and goats.

We met here some peasants with guns. They had licenses, I suppose, as that is the law. The Vendetta must be suppressed, and guns are prohibited, except under special license. The game is plentiful. We saw the red-legged partridge and the hare. Blackbirds, called merle (not our blackbird of America, but a bird quite in vogue here for the table) are sought, not only for sport but as a business, to be potted for commerce. The crow here is partly white, and we saw plenty of them. Hundreds of peasants, women and men, were scattered over the plain, picking out the weeds and bad barley from the young grain.

This plain is the precursor of the Greek colony of Carghese, which we have resolved to visit. Certainly the environs of Carghese bespeak more of industry than the Corsicans bestow even on their fat plains. The Greek colony has been here for over four hundred years. I have looked in vain through the meagre

little pamphlets on Corsica, into the French geographies, and guide-books, intended to instruct the stranger about this island; I find no allusion to this colony or its history. But from personal observation of the people and their habits and features, and from a comparison of my own observations when in Greece, I have no doubt that Carghese is, as represented, a Greek colony. These Greeks, flying from the tyranny of the Ottoman, landed on this promontory, which encloses the Gulf of Sagone. They have made it rich in production, if not classic in cultivation. For many years their descendants refused to intermarry with the islanders. They preserved their religion, their dress, their language and customs; but their seclusion is giving way, as I should judge, by what I learned during our stay.

We were hardly ready for this Attic colony before we were in its village. It lies under the brow of the mountain. Our eyes and minds were employed as we rode along the coast, in viewing the ever-splendid sea, all white with the recent tempest, and lashing itself into mist against the rocky shores. The cultivation of the lands is superior. The prickly pear is common, but most the vine, for which these Greeks are celebrated, abounds on the mountain sides. Our premonitions that we were approaching the Greeks were, the *Greek* cross on the road side; and here and there fountains, where Grecian maidens and old women, with their classic water-jars, made quite a tableau. These are the children of the great old Greeks of whom we have read. The nose, the eye, the mien —though they are of peasants—indicate the physical elegance of the Grecian. We drive into town. There, as if on parade in the street, and marching with a French officer, is the venerable Greek priest. He fills your idea of a Druid, under the most ancient of

oaks. His beard was half-way down his body, and milk-white: his hair is long and white; he wears a long, black robe, and black sombrero of immense periphery of rim. We drove to the inn. There we find a Greek landlady, very proud, indeed, of her Grecian blood, and of two Greek daughters, very beautiful. Their faces might have been chiselled by Phidias. The son of the landlady, however, has married a black-eyed Corsican girl, who can talk French. She invites us to the hospitalities; but, unlike the Corsican and Catholic people, she charges for them with an exaggerated idea of their value. She is the daughter of our landlady at La Piana. After partaking of the rare wines of Carghese, we visit the Greek church, and luckily, while prayers are said by another Greek priest with long black hair and beard. This church is very small, but there is a grand one now building, started by a subscription from the late Emperor of Russia, Nicholas. The process of erection does not go on with much alacrity. The church we visited was slightly decorated. It rejoiced in some pictorial daubs of saints. The neighbouring Catholic church is much more prosperous; and I should say that the Latin race and its religion was fast absorbing the remnant of the children of Epaminondas and Pericles, left so forlorn on these distant shores.

I cannot say much for the intelligence of these descendants of Socrates and Plato. Endeavouring to explain to some of them that I had sent a despatch under an ocean three thousand miles broad, which was received several hours earlier in America than when it started from France—these people looked amazed. No explanation of the sun's apparent motion, caused by the earth's motion about its axis, or of the telegraphic cable, could make the statement

comprehensible. Well, perhaps it would be a poser for Aristotle himself. Wine, figs, raisins, broccio, they understood: and after a good time, long to be remembered, we started again, and arrived at Sagone.

I do not know whether it is from the intensity of the sun's beams, or from want of cleanliness; but in Corsica there are a good many people with sore eyes. In Sagone the people seemed to be distinguished by being one-eyed. The landlady, and the girl who helped her—almost everybody but curate and custom-house officers—were one-eyed. The blacksmith was a genuine Polyphemus. But all—officers included—had an eye-single to our comfort. No pay would they accept. They pressed us to remain; forced on us wine, cheese, and bread; and after many regrets, we left them to dash through four hours of descent into Ajaccio.

From this round trip, which I have described, made at an unpropitious season, but made very pleasant by unceasing hospitality, my readers may glean something about this island not to be found in any other way, or in any book. We propose to make visits to other towns over the island, over the mountains again to Bastia; through Corte, the ancient capital; thence to Calvi; thence again, after returning to Bastia, to the South, through the chestnut land, to Bonifacia. But this is in reserve for a better month; and, perhaps, from the other side of the island. Bastia can be reached from Genoa, or Leghorn, in a few hours of boating and in a smooth sea; for Corsica is a breakwater against the storms from the South and West.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CLAIMS OF CORSICA AS A HEALTH RESORT, ETC.

"Almost all patients lie with their faces to the light, exactly as plants make their way towards the light."—*Florence Nightingale.*

IN the preliminary chapter, I have endeavoured to explain the title of the volume—'Search after Sunbeams.' I have pursued this search, with some days of failure, in the mountains. But on returning to Ajaccio, whose situation and surroundings are at once beautiful and salubrious, I might be pardoned for trying in a few pages to attain a more valuable object than the mere description of scenery or people.

It has been a great desideratum with physicians to find a climate which is dry, warm, and stimulating in winter for patients suffering from pulmonary troubles. Any doctor of eminence in Europe or America, who has kept pace with the advance of his profession, will advise, not that his patient should go to Nassau—that is too hot; nor to Cuba, for the same reason; nor the Island of Madeira—that is too moist, and, while it mitigates suffering, does not cure; but he would advise a climate which is at once stimulating and mild.

Ajaccio, like Nice, Cannes, Mentone, and other towns of the coast, is screened by the great mountains of the island. The town is especially protected from the north-west by a spur descending to the sea from

the great range into whose bosom we have travelled. It is warmer than Nice. No harsh winds blow unless you go, imprudently, as I did, into the very mountains in February. The atmosphere is still; the weather is constantly fine. Although we are here in the worst month and have ventured into the high latitude of the mountains, and roughed it generally, yet we have found but little difference between this climate in March and that of New York in May.

The number of aged people we have met with in Corsica is incredible. Joyce Heyth would have lived here to the full measure of Mr. Barnum's apocryphal statement. Indeed, there does live, up in the beautiful country which we have visited, near Vico, in the valley of Liamone, in the hamlet of Murzo, the veritable old woman, Angela Pietro, aged 110 years, who was the servant of the mother of the first Napoleon. She was with Madame Letitia at the time of the Anti-French émeute at Ajaccio, when the Bonaparte family had to 'run for it.' She is nearly blind, but has some memory, and talks of the Great Napoleon and the events of those memorable days with the volubility of Joyce, if not with her imagination.

But, with all these healthy elements, one thing Corsica has not, as yet, but soon will have—good and comfortable accommodations for the invalid and tourist. One thing, however, it has, which makes up for the lack of these—a fresh, glorious scenery of mountain and sea, whose ever-varying charms I have tried, I hope not quite in vain, to picture. But these attractions, however charming and however painted, are but whip-syllabub compared to the substantial benefits which, like good nutriment, help to build up the debilitated frames which have inherited or inhaled the poison of consumption.

There will always be one impediment to Corsica

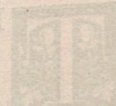
as a winter health resort. The invalid must cross in winter a stormy sea. He may become port-bound, before he can either reach his haven or leave it. An American friend—a lady—was kept three weeks at Ajaccio before she could get away. This was in consequence of the storms, and the uncertainty of the arrival and departure of the Nice and Marseilles vessels. Besides, the steamers propose to run only once a fortnight. The accommodations in Ajaccio are poor; the apartments are not 'glorified' by the sunbeams. Most of my time was spent in lying around, over the sun-warmed rocks of the bay, reading and writing, or gathering the tiny exquisite shells which fill the nooks of the rocks and the sand of the beach. We found hospitable and comfortable quarters with Dr. Ribton, in cottage No. 1, along the promenade or Cours Napoleon. Our windows looked out upon, and across the bay—a perpetual sparkling joy! The view reached to the mountains of snow beyond its shores—and the breath of all the perfumes of Arabia seemed to come from these mountains on the approach of evening. We were happy in having such apartments with such views. The hotels of the town—some two or three—have sunless and dirty rooms; the servants are ignorant and not by any means neat in apparel or habits, and the prices charged for such poor accommodation are exorbitant. These are the offsets to the attraction of Corsica. One thing is to be said, and said in a hundred ways, that the main thing, for which Corsica is to be visited, is its mountain scenery; and this as well by invalids as healthy tourists. The proper time for this is in May, when the snow is all off the interior, when the forests and peaks may be reached and the vines and chesnuts are coming out in green.

The climate of Ajaccio may, for some invalids—

especially those in the earlier and more curable stages of phthisis, be too relaxing. One of my American friends found it so this winter. He left for Capri, to test that place; he had spent most of the winter in Mentone, with the best results. He needed the dry, invigorating climate of the Riviera. A winter climate, like that of Ajaccio—temperate, sunny, and rather moist, with the uniformity of Madeira, and without the heat of Egypt, or sirocco of Sicily, without the bad drainage of Naples, or the unpleasant river-bed of Malaga—would be more suitable for the advanced and almost remediless stage of the disease. Life might be happily prolonged under such a sky; and under proper hygienic conditions, it might be saved. But as the conclusion of my judgment, and as the result of a long search after the 'beams' which have the most balm, I yield my preference to the Riviera and Mentone. Yet as I leave Ajaccio, where I have received so much happiness and strength, I cast a lingering look behind. If I visit it again, I shall regret that social disquietudes have driven my friend Dr. Ribton even to Capri.

I close this chapter on the steamer from Ajaccio. It is a bright sunny morning. Three or four hours and we are at Nice; we shall then be on solid continental ground again, and nearer home. We have had a rough night on the sea; but how brightly breaks the morning! Far off—forty miles or more—I can discern, with perfect clearness and without glass, the snow mountains of the Maritime Alps, making a circle of silvery beauty, almost afloat in the upper ether! From this distance no shore line is visible, nor is the lower range of mountains on the Riviera. The dark range of the Estrelles beyond Cannes, to the west, is faintly seen. The splendid vision of these distant cloud-like mountains, is proof

to me of the rather *grandiose* statement in a preceding chapter, viz.:—That from a lofty, or a distant point, in this pure air, and under favorable conditions, one may, with a *coup d' œil*, grasp a splendid range of mountain scenery—almost take in half the shores of France and Italy!

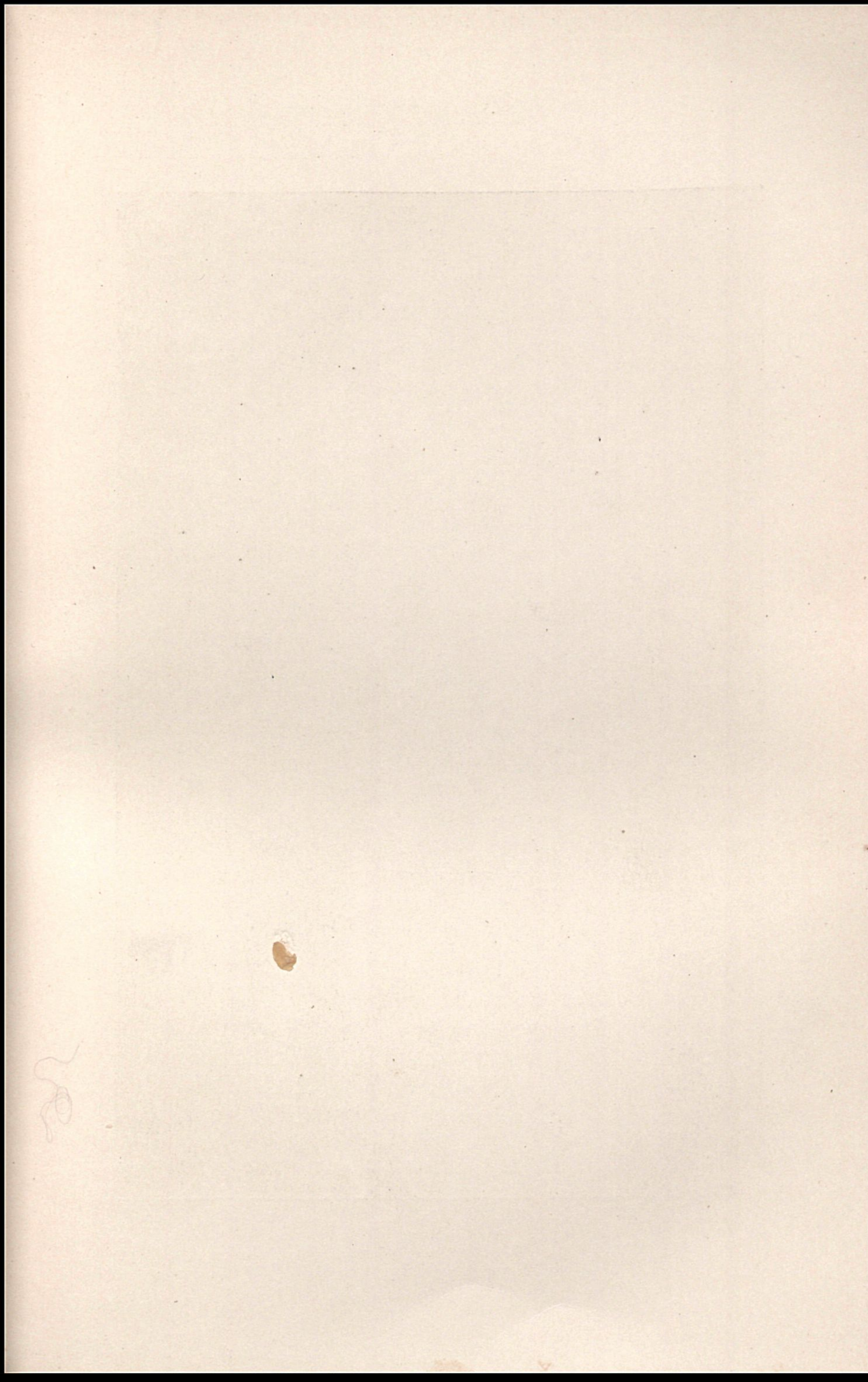


CHAPTER VIII.

ADVENT INTO AFRICA.

> "Gaze where some distant sail a speck supplies,
> With all the thirsting eye of—Enterprize!
> Tell o'er the tales of many a night of toil,
> And marvel where they next shall seize a spoil.—
> No matter where,—their chief's allotment this:
> Theirs, to believe no prey or plan amiss."
>
> BYRON'S 'Corsair.'

HE excitement of leaving a port like Marseilles is not lessened because it is in a foreign land. There is always a sense of the uncertainty of such a voyage over the waste of waters; but there was a special and emphatic feeling as we passed out of Europe with our prow turned towards Africa. The gateways of Marseilles, constructed out of immense blocks of artificial stone, the rocks and isles about the harbour, and the mountains by the sea, are so bleak and grand, that one cannot leave them behind without admiration, and, if a poor sailor, without emotion. One hundred and sixty-eight years before, Addison sailed out of Marseilles on his visit to Italy. He could not fail to see the classic aspects of the place, and records the olive-trees and gardens, 'the sweet plants—as wild thyme, lavender, rosemary, balme, and mirtle;' and the deserts, as he terms the rocky places. He found where Ulysses shed the blood of victims, and 'raised a pale assembly of the dead;' but he gives us no account of the splendid harbour out of which he moved, and which Nature had made for the commercial metropolis



City of Algiers.

of France. Could Addison have seen, what we saw, the hundred ships under sail, and the steamers under way, he might have given more than one quotation to illustrate the initiation of his voyage.

Our vessel was not well ballasted; it had a wabbling motion scarcely endurable. But the beautiful sea nearly made us forget the consequent uneasiness. What a sea it was! The greenish-blue was so bright, the crests so glittering, the offing so ethereal, and the sun sank in bars of red, violet, and gold. The warm air, in spite of all premonitions from within, drew us to the deck, and we began to feel that we were on our way to a sunnier clime. It was like a voyage to the Hesperides, with the anticipation of the sun, bloom, fruit, and joys of the classic garden, and without the Dragon to disturb the promise.

On the next day we passed between Minorca and Majorca. Our glasses failed to reveal much of interest or of beauty. Still the lofty summit of Monte Toro was to us a beacon and a sign.

As we neared Algiers, the sight of that mysterious Afric land was welcome. At first the city was a little triangle of white specks; then it grew into a city whose surroundings, from the Sahel hills to the Atlas snowy mountains on the left, were full of real interest. Then the long low line of coast came in view, and the white square houses loomed up before the vision; then, with the aid of an English resident, we could perceive to the right the dark rocky inlets and forts which the corsairs made their lair; and, finally, we wound into the jetties of the bay and harbour, and were at rest in the tranquil waters of Africa. There is here a harbour or jetty quite artificial, and a hundred vessels, many of them steamers, are within. A green spot within the harbour tells us that the French are here, for we see the soldiers and cannon. The heat is

intense, but it is not that of the sirocco. Nor is the city wanting in European comfort. The new Hotel d'Orient received us, and the motley groups at wharf and dock and in the streets were a continual provocation to our curiosity. The crowds were as many-coloured as Joseph's coat, and they fought for our baggage in a very rough way. The pervading impression as I looked at Algiers from the ocean and in the bay, at its old and new town, its green hills covered with villas, and its compact town of white houses, was—how remote from the world is all this! Who would come so far to see so little? This is all that remains on this coast to mark the power of the Barbary corsairs who held Europe in fear so long!

Soon we are assured that we are in the Orient. Veiled women and bournoused men; flowing robes and mysterious wrappages; ragged Bedouins driving donkeys, or sitting on them, their long robes almost dragging in the white dust of the street; mosques with minarets and domes, surrounded by slow, lazy, easy-going people; palm-trees and stately aloes, cactus and lilac, fuchsias and bignonias; all the sweet flowers, fragrant shrubs, and stately trees, which are made of the sunbeams, soon assured us that we were in a milder clime than we had left. It was the Orient, at the door of Europe. Forty odd hours of sea-going, and here we are in the very home of Abd-el-Kader, and among the children of the desert!

But all is confusion yet. Such a mixed and bizarre company of beings at every turn must give us pause. It takes time, inquiry, and study, to classify the confusion incident to a city so Mosaic in its character and people. The different nationalities and costumes were like the moving figures at a fair. The thirty-six years of French occupation has not greatly changed the shell, much less the kernel, of the Orientalism and