

BARING-GOULD SABINE

**A BOOK OF THE
RIVIERA**

Sabine Baring-Gould
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S. Baring-Gould

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*“ON OLD HYEMS’ CHIN, AND ICY CROWN, AN
ODOROUS CHAPLET OF SWEET SUMMER BUDS IS
SET.”*

Midsummer Night’s Dream, ii. 2.

PREFACE

THIS little book has for its object to interest the many winter visitors to the Ligurian coast in the places that they see.

A consecutive history of Provence and Genoese Liguria was out of the question; it would be long and tedious. I have taken a few of the most prominent incidents in the history of the coast, and have given short biographies of interesting personages connected with it. The English visitor calls the entire coast – from Marseilles to Genoa – the Riviera; but the French distinguish their portion as the Côte d’Azur, and the Italians distinguish theirs as the Riviera di Ponente. I have not included the whole of this latter, so as not to make the book too bulky, but have stayed my pen at Savona.

CHAPTER I

PROVENCE

Montpellier and the Riviera compared – The discovery of the Riviera as a winter resort – A district full of historic interest – Geology of the coast – The flora – Exotics – The original limit of the sea – The formation of the *craus*– The Mistral – The olive and cypress – Les Alpines – The chalk formation – The Jura limestone – Eruptive rocks – The colouring of Provence – The towns and their narrow streets – Early history – The Phœnicians – Arrival of the Phocœans – The Roman province – Roman remains – Destruction of the theatre at Arles – Visigoths and Burgundians – The Saracens – When Provence was joined to France – Pagan customs linger on – Floral games – Carnival – The origin of the Fauxbourdon – How part-singing came into the service of the church – Reform in church music – Little Gothic architecture in Provence – Choirs at the west end at Grasse and Vence

Carlo, the Company that owns these tables furnish him with a railway ticket that will take him home, or to any distance he likes, the further the better, that he may hang or shoot himself anywhere else save in the gardens of the Casino. On much the same principle, at the beginning of last century, the physicians of England recommended their consumptive patients to go to Montpellier, where they might die out of sight, and not bring discredit on their doctors. As Murray well puts it: —

“It is difficult to understand how it came to be chosen by the physicians of the North as a retreat for consumptive patients, since nothing can be more trying to weak lungs than its variable climate, its blazing sunshine alternating with the piercingly cold blasts of the *mistral*. Though its sky be clear, its atmosphere is filled with dust, which must be hurtful to the lungs.”

The discovery of a better place, with equable temperature, and protection from the winds, was due to an accident.

In 1831, Lord Brougham, flying from the fogs and cold of England in winter, was on his way to Italy, the classic land of sunshine, when he was delayed on the French coast of the Mediterranean by the fussiness of the Sardinian police, which would not suffer him to pass the frontier without undergoing quarantine, lest he should be the means of introducing cholera into Piedmont. As he was obliged to remain for a considerable time on the coast, he spent it in rambling along the Gulf of Napoule. This was to him a veritable revelation. He found the

sunshine, the climate, the flowers he was seeking at Naples where he then was, at Napoule. He went no farther; he bought an estate at Cannes, and there built for himself a winter residence. He talked about his discovery. It was written about in the papers. Eventually it was heard of by the physicians, and they ceased to recommend their patients to go to Montpellier, but rather to try Cannes. When Lord Brougham settled there, it was but a fishing village; in thirty years it was transformed; and from Cannes stretches a veritable rosary of winter resorts to Hyères on one side to Alassio on the other; as white grains threaded on the line from Marseilles to Genoa. As this chain of villas, hotels, casinos, and shops has sprung up so recently, the whole looks extremely modern, and devoid of historic interest. That it is not so, I hope to show. This modern fringe is but a fringe on an ancient garment; but a superficial sprinkling over beds of remote antiquity rich in story.

Sometimes it is but a glimpse we get – as at Antibes, where a monument was dug up dedicated to the manes of a little “boy from the North, aged twelve years, who danced and pleased” in the theatre. The name of the poor lad is not given; but what a picture does it present! Possibly, of a British child-slave sent to caper, with sore heart, before the Roman nobles and ladies – and who pined and died. But often we have more than a hint. The altar piece of the Burning Bush at Aix gives up an authentic portrait of easy-going King René, the luckless wearer of many crowns, and the possessor of not a single kingdom – René, the father of

the still more luckless Margaret, wife of our Henry VI.

Among the Montagnes des Maures, on a height are the cisterns and foundations of the stronghold of the Saracens, their last stronghold on this side of the Pyrenees, whence they swept the country, burning and slaying, till dislodged in 972 by William, Count of Provence. Again, the house at Draguignan of Queen Joanna, recalls her tragic story; the wife of four husbands, the murderess of the first, she for whose delectation Boccaccio collected his merry, immoral tales; she, who sold Avignon to the Popes, and so brought about their migration from Rome, the Babylonish captivity of near a hundred years; she – strangled finally whilst at her prayers.

The Estérel, now clothed in forest, reminds us of how Charles V. advancing through Provence to claim it as his own, hampered by peasants in this group of mountains, set the forests on fire, and for weeks converted the district into one great sea of flame around the blood-red rocks.

Marseilles recalls the horrors of the Revolution, and the roar of that song, smelling of blood, to which it gave its name. At Toulon, Napoleon first drew attention to his military abilities; at S. Raphael he landed on his return from Egypt, on his way to Paris, to the 18th Brumaire, to the Consulate, to the Empire; and here also he embarked for Elba after the battle of Leipzig.

But leaving history, let us look at what Nature affords of interest. Geologically that coast is a great picture book of successions of deposits and of convulsions. There are to be

found recent conglomerates, chalk, limestone, porphyry, new red sandstone, mica schist, granite. The Estérel porphyry is red as if on fire, seen in the evening sun. The mica schist of the Montagnes des Maures strews about its dust, so shining, so golden, that in 1792 a representative of the Department went up to Paris with a handful, to exhibit to the Convention as a token of the ineptitude of the Administration of Var, that trampled under foot treasures sufficient to defray the cost of a war against all the kings of the earth.

The masses of limestone are cleft with *clus*, gorges through which the rivers thunder, and *foux* springs of living water bursting out of the bowels of the mountains.

Consider what the variety of geologic formation implies: an almost infinite variety of plants; moreover, owing to the difference of altitudes, the flora reaches in a chromatic scale from the fringe of the Alpine snows to the burning sands by the seas. In one little commune, it is estimated that there are more varieties to be found than in the whole of Ireland.

But the visitor to the seaboard – the French Côte d’azur and the Italian Riviera – returns home after a winter sojourn there with his mind stored with pictures of palms, lemons, oranges, agaves, aloes, umbrella pines, eucalyptus, mimosa, carob-trees, and olives. This is the vegetation that characterises the Riviera, that distinguishes it from vegetation elsewhere; but, although these trees and shrubs abound, and do form a dominant feature in the scenery, yet every one of them is a foreign importation,

and the indigenous plants must be sought in mountain districts, away from towns, and high-roads, and railways.

These strangers from Africa, Asia, Australia and South America have occupied the best land and the warmest corners, just as of old the Greek and Roman colonists shouldered out the native tribes, and forced them to withdraw amidst the mountains.

The traveller approaching the Riviera by the line from Lyons, after passing Valence, enters a valley that narrows, through which rolls the turbid flood of the Rhone. Presently the sides become steeper, higher, more rocky, and draw closer; on the right appears Viviers, dominated by its cathedral and tower, square below, octagonal above, and here the Rhone becomes more rapid as it enters the *Robinet de Donzère*, between calcareous rocks full of caves and rifts. Then, all at once, the line passes out of the rocky portal, and the traveller enters on another scene altogether, the vast triangular plain limited by the Alps on one side and the Cevennes on the other, and has the Mediterranean as its base. To this point at one time extended a mighty gulf, seventy miles from the present coast-line at the mouth of the Rhone. Against the friable limestone cliffs, the waves lapped and leaped. But at some unknown time a cataclysm occurred. The Alps were shaken, as we shake a tree to bring down its fruit, and the Rhone and the Durance, swollen to an enormous volume, rolled down masses of débris into this gulf and choked it. The Durance formed its own little *crau* along the north of the chain of the Alpines, and the Rhone the far larger *crau* of Arles, the pebbles of which all come

from the Alps, in which the river takes its rise. But, in fact, the present *craus* represent but a small portion of the vast mass of rubbish brought down. They are just that part which in historic times was not overlaid with soil.

When this period was passed, the rivers relaxed their force, and repented of the waste they had made, and proceeded to chew into mud the pebbles they rolled along, and, rambling over the level stretches of rubble, to deposit upon it a fertilising epidermis. Then, in modern times, the engineers came and banked in the Rhone, to restrain its vagaries, so that now it pours its precious mud into the sea, and yearly projects its ugly muzzle further forwards. When we passed the rocky portal, we passed also from the climate of the North into that of the South, but not to that climate without hesitations. For the sun beating on the level land heats the pebble bed, so that the air above it quivers as over a lime-kiln, and, rising, is replaced by a rush of icy winds from the Alps. This downrush is the dreaded Mistral. It was a saying of old: —

“Parlement, Mistral, et Durance
Sont les trois fléaux de Provence.”

The Parliament is gone, but the Mistral still rages, and the Durance still overflows and devastates.

The plain, where cultivated, is lined and cross-lined as with Indian ink. These lines, and cross-lines, are formed of cypress,

veritable walls of defence, thrown up against the wind. When the Mistral rages, they bow as whips, and the water of the lagoons is licked up and spat at the walls of the sparsely scattered villages. Here and there rises the olive, like smoke from a lowly cottage. It shrinks from the bite of the frost and the lash of the wind, and attains its proper height and vigour only as we near the sea; and is in the utmost luxuriance between Solliès Pont and Le Luc, growing on the rich new red sandstone, that skirts the Montagnes des Maures.

Presently we come on the lemon, the orange, glowing golden, oleanders in every gully, aloes (“God’s candelabra”), figs, mulberries, pines with outspread heads, like extended umbrellas, as the cypress represents one folded; cork trees, palms with tufted heads; all seen through an atmosphere of marvellous clearness, over-arched by a sky as blue as that of Italy, and with – as horizon – the deeper, the indigo blue, of the sea.

On leaving Arles, the train takes the bit between its teeth and races over the *crau*, straight as an arrow, between lines of cypresses. It is just possible to catch glimpses to the north, between the cypresses, of a chain of hills of opalescent hue. That chain, Les Alpines, gives its direction to the Durance. This river lent its aid to Brother Rhone to form this rubble plain, the *Campus lapideus* of the Romans, the modern *crau*. This was a desert over which the mirage alternated with the Mistral, till Adam de Craponne, in the sixteenth century, brought a canal from the Durance to water the stony land, and since then, little

by little, the desert is being reclaimed. This vast stony plain was a puzzle to the ancients, and Æschylus, who flourished B.C. 472, tells us that Heracles, arriving at this plain to fight the Ligurians, and being without weapons, Heaven came to his aid and poured down great stones out of the sky against his foes. This is much like the account in Joshua of the battle against the Kings in the plain of Esdraelon.

At length, at Miramas, we escape from between the espalier cypresses and see that the distant chain has drawn nearer, that it has lost its mother-of-pearl tints, and has assumed a ghastly whiteness. Then we dash among these cretaceous rocks, desolate, forbidding and dead. They will attend us from Marseilles to Toulon.

The cretaceous sea bed, that once occupied so vast an area, has been lifted into downs and mountains, and stretched from Dorset and Wiltshire to Dover. We catch a glimpse of it at Amiens. A nodule that has defied erosion sustains the town and cathedral of Laon. It underlies the Champagne country. It asserts itself sullenly and resolutely in Provence, where it overlies the Jura limestone, and is almost indistinguishable from it at the junction, for it has the same inclination, the same fossils, and the same mineralogical constituents.

In England we are accustomed to the soft skin of thymy turf that covers the chalk on our downs. Of this there is none in Provence. The fierce sun forbids it. Consequently the rock is naked and cadaverously white, but scantily sprinkled over with

stunted pines.

The Jura limestone is the great *pièce de resistance* in Provence: it is sweeter in colour than the chalk, ranging from cream white to buff and salmon; it has not the dead pallor of the chalk. Any one who has gone down the Cañon of the Tarn knows what exquisite gradations and harmonies of tone are to be found in Jura limestone. Here this formation stands up as a wall to the North, a mighty screen, sheltering the Riviera from the boreal winds. It rises precipitously to a plateau that is bald and desolate, but which is rent by ravines of great majesty and beauty, through which rush the waters from the snowy Alps. The chalk and the limestone are fissured, and allow the water flowing over their surface to filter down and issue forth in the valleys, rendering these fertile and green, whereas the plateaux are bare. The plateaux rise to the height of 3,000 or 4,500 feet.

The tract between the mountain wall of limestone and the sea is made up of a molass of rolled fragments of the rock in a paste of mud. This forms hills of considerable height, and this also is sawn through here and there by rills, or washed out by rivers.

Altogether different in character is the mass of the Montagnes des Maures, which is an uplifted body of granite and schist.

Altogether different again is the Estérel, a protruded region of red porphyry.

About these protruded masses may be seen the new red sandstone.

When we have mastered this – and it is simple enough to

remember – we know the character of the geology from the mouths of the Rhone to Albenga.

“The colouring of Provence,” says Mr. Hammerton, “is pretty in spring, when the fields are still green and the mulberry trees are in leaf, and the dark cypress and grey olive are only graver notes in the brightness, while the desolation of the stony hills is prevented from becoming oppressive by the freshness of the foreground; but when the hot sun and the dry wind have scorched every remnant of verdure, when any grass that remains is merely ungathered hay, and you have nothing but flying dust and blinding light, then the great truth is borne in upon you that it is Rain which is the true colour magician, though he may veil himself in a vesture of grey cloud.”

In winter and early spring it is that the coast is enjoyable. In winter there is the evergreen of the palms, the olive, the ilex, the cork tree, the carob, the orange and lemon and myrtle. Indeed, in the Montagnes des Maures and in the Estérel, it is always spring.

The resident in winter can hardly understand the structure of the towns, with streets at widest nine feet, and the houses running up to five and six storeys; but this is due to necessity. The object is double: by making the streets so narrow, the sun is excluded, and the sun in Provence is not sought as with us in England; and secondly, these narrow thoroughfares induce a draught down them. In almost every town the contrast between the new and the old is most marked, for the occupants of the new town reside there for the winter only, and therefore court

the sun; whereas the inhabitants of the old town dwell in it all the year round, and consequently endeavour to obtain all protection possible from the sun. But this shyness of basking in the sun was not the sole reason why the streets were made so narrow. The old towns and even villages were crowded within walls; a girdle of bulwark surrounded them, they had no space for expansion except upwards.

What Mr. Hammerton says of French towns applies especially to those of Provence: —

“France has an immense advantage over England in the better harmony between her cities and towns, and the country where they are placed. In England it rarely happens that a town adds to the beauty of a landscape; in France it often does so. In England there are many towns that are quite absolutely and hideously destructive of landscape beauty; in France there are very few. The consequence is that in France a lover of landscape does not feel that dislike to human interference which he so easily acquires in England, and which in some of our best writers, who feel most intensely and acutely, has become positive hatred and exasperation.”

It was fear of the Moors and the pirates of the Mediterranean which drove the inhabitants of the sea-coast to build their towns on the rocks, high uplifted, walled about and dominated by towers.

I will now give a hasty sketch of the early history of Provence — so far as goes to explain the nature of its population.

The earliest occupants of the seaboard named in history are the Ligurians. The Gulf of Lyons takes its name from them, in a contracted form. Who these Ligurians were, to what stock they belonged, is not known; but as there are megalithic monuments in the country, covered avenues at Castelet, near Arles, dolmens at Draguignan and Saint Vallier, a menhir at Cabasse, we may perhaps conclude with some probability that they were a branch of that great Ivernian race which has covered all Western Europe with these mysterious remains. At an early period, the Phœnicians established trading depôts at Marseilles, Nice, and elsewhere along the coast. Monaco was dedicated to their god, Melkarth, whose equivalent was the Greek Heracles, the Roman Hercules. The story of Heracles fighting the gigantic Ligurians on the *crau*, assisted by Zeus pouring down a hail of pebbles from heaven, is merely a fabulous rendering of the historic fact that the Phœnician settlers had to fight the Ligurians, represented as giants, not because they were of monstrous size, but because of their huge stone monuments.

The Phœnicians drew a belt of colonies and trading stations along the Mediterranean, and were masters of the commerce. The tin of Britain, the amber of the Baltic, passed through their hands, and their great emporium was Marseilles. It was they who constructed the Heracleian Road, afterwards restored and regulated by the Romans, that connected all their settlements from the Italian frontier to the Straits of Gibraltar. They have left traces of their sojourn in place names; in their time, Saint

Gilles, then Heraclea, was a port at the mouth of the Rhone; now it is thirty miles inland. Herculea Caccabaria, now Saint Tropez, recalls Kaccabe, the earliest name of Carthage. One of the islets outside the harbour of Marseilles bore the name of Phœnice.

This energetic people conveyed the ivory of Africa to Europe, worked the lead mines of the Eastern Pyrenees, and sent the coral and purple of the Mediterranean and the bronze of the Po basin over Northern Europe. The prosperity of Tyre depended on its trade.

“Inventors of alphabetical writing, of calculation, and of astronomy, essential to them in their distant navigations, skilful architects, gold-workers, jewellers, engravers, weavers, dyers, miners, founders, glass-workers, coiners, past-masters of all industries, wonderful sailors, intrepid tradesmen, the Phœnicians, by their incomparable activity, held the old world in their grip; and from the Persian Gulf to the Isles of Britain, either by their caravans or by their ships, were everywhere present as buyers or sellers.”¹

Archæological discoveries come to substantiate the conclusions arrived at from scanty allusions by the ancients. The Carthaginians had succeeded to the trade of Tyre; but Carthage was a daughter of Tyre. At Marseilles have been found forty-seven little stone chapels or shrines of Melkarth, seated under an arch, either with his hands raised, sustaining the arch, or with

¹ Vinet, *L'Art et l'Archæologie*, Mission de Phénicie, Paris, 1862.

them resting on his knees; and these are identical in character with others found at Tyre, Sidon, and Carthage. Nor is this all. An inscription has been unearthed, also at Marseilles, containing a veritable Levitical code for the worship of Baal, regulating the emoluments of his priests.

In the year B.C. 542 a fleet of Phocœans came from Asia Minor, flying from the Medes; and the citizens of Phocœa, abandoning their ancient homes, settled along the coast of the Riviera. Arles, Marseilles, Nice – all the towns became Greek. It was they who introduced into the land of their adoption the vine and the olive. They acquired the trade of the Mediterranean after the fall of Carthage, B.C. 146.

The Greeks of the coast kept on good terms with Rome. They it was who warned Rome of the approach of Hannibal; and when the Ambrons and Teutons poured down a mighty host with purpose to devastate Italy, the Phocœan city of Marseilles furnished Marius with a contingent, and provisioned his camp at the junction of the Durance with the Rhone.

The Romans were desirous of maintaining good relations with the Greek colonies, and when the native Ligurians menaced Nice and Antibes, they sent an army to their aid, and having defeated the barbarians, gave up the conquered territory to the Greeks.

In B.C. 125, Lucius Sextius Calvinus attacked the native tribes in their fastness, defeated them, and founded the town of Aquæ Sextiæ, about the hot springs that rise there – now Aix. The Ligurians were driven to the mountains and not suffered to

approach the sea coast, which was handed over entirely to the Greeks of Marseilles.

So highly stood the credit of Marseilles, that when, after the conclusion of the Asiatic War, the Senate of Rome had decreed the destruction of Phocœa, they listened to a deputation from Marseilles, pleading for the mother city, and revoked the sentence. Meanwhile, the Gauls had been pressing south, and the unfortunate Ligurians, limited to the stony plateaux and the slopes of the Alps, were nipped between them and the Greeks and Romans along the coast. They made terms with the Gauls and formed a Celto-Ligurian league. They were defeated, and the Senate of Rome decreed the annexation of all the territory from the Rhone to the Alps, to constitute thereof a province. Thenceforth the cities and slopes of the coast became places of residence for wealthy Romans, who had there villas and gardens. The towns were supplied with amphitheatres and baths. Theatres they possessed before, under the Greeks; but the brutal pleasures of the slaughter of men was an introduction by the Romans. The remains of these structures at Nîmes, Arles, Fréjus, Cimiez, testify to the crowds that must have delighted in these horrible spectacles. That of Nîmes would contain from 17,000 to 23,000 spectators; that of Arles 25,000; that of Fréjus an equal number.

Wherever the Roman empire extended, there may be seen the same huge structures, almost invariable in plan, and all devoted to pleasure and luxury. The forum, the temples, sink into insignificance beside the amphitheatre, the baths, and the circus.

Citizens of the empire lived for their ease and amusements, and concerned themselves little about public business. In the old days of the Republic, the interests, the contests, of the people were forensic. The forum was their place of assembly. But with the empire all was changed. Public transaction of business ceased, the despotic Cæsar provided for, directed, governed all, Roman citizens and subject peoples alike. They were left with nothing to occupy them, and they rushed to orgies of blood. Thus these vast erections tell us, more than the words of any historian, how great was the depravity of the Roman character.

But with the fifth century this condition of affairs came to an end. The last time that the circus of Arles was used for races was in 462. The theatre there was wrecked by a deacon called Cyril in 446. At the head of a mob he burst into it, and smashed the loveliest statues of the Greek chisel, and mutilated every article of decoration therein. The stage was garnished with elegant colonnets; all were thrown down and broken, except a few that were carried off to decorate churches. All the marble casing was ripped away, the bas-reliefs were broken up, and the fragments heaped in the pit. There was some excuse for this iconoclasm. The stage had become licentious to the last degree, and there was no drawing the people from the spectacles. "If," says Salvian, "as often happens, the public games coincide with a festival of the Church, where will the crowd be? In the house of God, or in the amphitheatre?"

During that fifth century the Visigoths and the Burgundians

threatened Provence. When these entered Gaul they were the most humanised of the barbarians; they had acquired some aptitude for order, some love of the discipline of civil life. They did not devastate the cities, they suffered them to retain their old laws, their religion, and their customs. With the sixth century the domination of the Visigoths was transferred beyond the Pyrenees, and the Burgundians had ceased to be an independent nation; the Franks remained masters over almost the whole of Gaul.

In 711 the Saracens, or Moors, crossed over at Gibraltar and invaded Spain. They possessed themselves as well of Sicily, Sardinia, and the Balearic Isles. Not content with this, they cast covetous eyes on Gaul. They poured through the defiles of the Pyrenees and spread over the rich plains of Aquitaine and of Narbonne. Into this latter city the Calif Omar II. broke in 720, massacred every male, and reduced the women to slavery. Béziers, Saint Gilles, Arles, were devastated; Nîmes opened to them her gates. The horde mounted the valley of the Rhone and penetrated to the heart of France. Autun was taken and burnt in 725. All Provence to the Alps was theirs. Then in 732 came the most terrible of their invasions. More than 500,000 men, according to the chroniclers, led by Abdel-Raman, crossed the Pyrenees, took the road to Bordeaux, which they destroyed, and ascended the coast till they were met and annihilated by Charles Martel on the field of Poitiers.

From this moment the struggle changed its character. The

Christians assumed the offensive. Charles Martel pursued the retreating host, and took from them the port of Maguelonne; and when a crowd of refugees sought shelter in the amphitheatre of Arles, he set fire to it and hurled them back into the flames as they attempted to escape. Their last stronghold was Narbonne, where they held out for seven years, and then in 759 that also fell, and the Moorish power for evil in France was at an end; but all the south, from the Alps to the ocean, was strewn with ruins.

They were not, however, wholly discouraged. Not again, indeed, did they venture across the Pyrenees in a great host; but they harassed the towns on the coast, and intercepted the trade. When the empire of Charlemagne was dismembered, Provence was separated from France and constituted a kingdom, under the administration of one Boso, who was crowned at Arles in 879. This was the point of departure of successive changes, which shall be touched on in the sequel. The German kings and emperors laid claim to Provence as a vassal state, and it was not till 1481 that it was annexed to the Crown of France. Avignon and the Venaissin were not united to France till 1791.

In no part of Europe probably did pagan customs linger on with such persistence as in this favoured land of Provence, among a people of mixed blood – Ligurian, Phœnician, Greek, Roman, Saracen. Each current of uniting blood brought with it some superstition, some vicious propensity, or some strain of fancy. In the very first mention we have of the Greek settlers, allusion is made to the Floral Games. The Battle of Flowers, that draws

so many visitors to Nice, Mentone, and Cannes, is a direct descendant from them; but it has acquired a decent character comparatively recently.

At Arles, the Feast of Pentecost was celebrated throughout the Middle Ages by games ending with races of girls, stark naked, and the city magistrates presided over them, and distributed the prizes, which were defrayed out of the town chest. It was not till the sixteenth century, owing to the remonstrances of a Capuchin friar, that the exhibition was discontinued. Precisely the same took place at Beaucaire. At Grasse, every Thursday in Lent saw the performance in the public *place* of dances and obscene games, and these were not abolished till 1706 by the energy of the bishop, who threatened to excommunicate every person convicted of taking part in the disgusting exhibition of “Les Jouvines.”

A native of Tours visited Provence in the seventeenth century, and was so scandalised at what he saw there, that he wrote, in 1645, a letter of remonstrance to his friend Gassendi. Here is what he says of the manner in which the festival of S. Lazarus was celebrated at Marseilles: —

“The town celebrates this feast by dances that have the appearance of theatrical representations, through the multitude and variety of the figures performed. All the inhabitants assemble, men and women alike, wear grotesque masks, and go through extravagant capers. One would think they were satyrs fooling with nymphs. They hold hands, and

race through the town, preceded by flutes and violins. They form an unbroken chain, which winds and wriggles in and out among the streets, and this they call *le Grand Branle*. But why this should be done in honour of S. Lazarus is a mystery to me, as indeed are a host of other extravagances of which Provence is full, and to which the people are so attached, that if any one refuses to take part in them, they will devastate his crops and his belongings.”

The carnival and micarême have taken the place of this exhibition; and no one who has seen the revelries at these by night can say that this sort of fooling is nearing its end. Now these exhibitions have become a source of profit to the towns, as drawing foreigners to them, and enormous sums are lavished by the municipalities upon them annually. The people of the place enter into them with as much zest as in the centuries that have gone by.

Dancing in churches and churchyards lasted throughout the Middle Ages. The clergy in vain attempted to put it down, and, unable to effect this, preceded these choric performances by a sermon, to deter the people from falling into excesses of extravagance and vice. At Limoges, not indeed in Provence, the congregation was wont to intervene in the celebration of the feast of their apostle, S. Martial, by breaking out into song in the psalms, “Saint Martial pray for us, and we will dance for you!” Whereupon they joined hands and spun round in the church.²

² Fauriel, *Hist. de la Poésie Provençale*, 1846, i., pp. 169-171.

This leads to the mention of what is of no small interest in the history of the origin of part-singing. Anyone familiar with vespers, as performed in French churches, is aware that psalms and canticles are sung in one or other fashion: either alternate verses alone are chanted, and the gap is filled in by the organ going through astounding musical frolics; or else one verse is chanted in plain-song, and the next in *fauxbourdon*— that is to say, the tenor holds on to the plain-song, whilst treble and alto gambol at a higher strain a melody different, but harmonious with the plain-song. In Provence at high mass the Gloria and Credo are divided into paragraphs, and in like manner are sung alternately in plain-song and *fauxbourdon*. The origin of this part-singing is very curious. The congregation, loving to hear their own voices, and not particularly interested in, or knowing the Latin words, broke out into folk-song at intervals, in the same “mode” as that of the tone sung by the clergy. They chirped out some love ballad or dance tune, whilst the officiants in the choir droned the Latin of the liturgy. Even so late as 1645, the Provençals at Christmas were wont to sing in the *Magnificat* a vulgar song —

“Que ne vous requinquez-vous, Vielle,
Que ne vous requinquez, donc?”

which may be rendered —

“Why do you trick yourself out, old woman?
O why do you trick yourself so?”

In order to stop this sort of thing the clergy had recourse to “farcing” the canticles, *i. e.* translating each verse into the vernacular, and interlarding the Latin with the translation, in hopes that the people, if sing they would, would adopt these words; but the farced canticles were not to the popular taste, and they continued to roar out lustily their folk-songs, often indelicate, always unsuitable. This came to such a pass that either the organ was introduced to bellow the people down, or else the system was accepted and regulated; and to this is due the *fauxbourdon*. But in Italy and in the South of France it passed for a while beyond regulation. The musicians accepted it, and actually composed masses, in which the tenor alone sang the sacred words and the other parts performed folk-songs.

As Mr. Addington Symonds says: —

“The singers were allowed innumerable licences. Whilst the tenor sustained the Gregorian melody, the other voices indulged in extempore descant, regardless of the style of the main composition, violating time, and setting even the fundamental tone at defiance. The composers, to advance another step in the analysis of this strange medley, took particular delight in combining different sets of words, melodies of widely diverse character, antagonistic rhythms, and divergent systems of accentuation, in a single piece. They assigned these several ingredients to several parts, and for the further exhibition of their perverse skill, went even to the length of coupling themes in the major and

the minor. The most obvious result of such practice was that it became impossible to understand what was being sung, and that instead of concord and order in the choir, a confused discord and anarchy of dinning sounds prevailed. What made the matter, from an ecclesiastical point of view, still worse, was that these scholastically artificial compositions were frequently based on trivial and vulgar tunes, suggesting the tavern, the dancing-room, or even worse places, to worshippers assembled for the celebration of a Sacrament. Masses bore titles adopted from the popular airs on which they were founded; such, for example, as *Adieu, mes amours*, *À l'ombre d'un buissonnet*, *Baise moi*, *Le vilain jaloux*. Even the words of love ditties and obscene ballads were being squalled out by the tenor (treble?) while the bass (tenor?) gave utterance to an *Agnus Dei* or a *Benedictus*, and the soprano (alto?) was engaged upon the verses of a Latin hymn. Baini, who examined hundreds of the masses and motetts in MS., says that the words imported into them from vulgar sources 'make one's flesh creep, and one's hair stand on end.' He does not venture to do more than indicate a few of the more decent of these interloping verses. As an augmentation of this indecency, numbers from a mass which started with the grave rhythm of a Gregorian tone were brought to their conclusion on the dance measure of a popular *ballata*, so that *Incarnatus est* or *Kyrie eleison* went jiggling off into suggestions of Masetto and Zerlina at a village ball."³

³ *Renaissance in Italy*: "The Catholic Revival," ii. c. 12.

The musicians who composed these masses simply accepted what was customary, and all they did was to endeavour to reduce the hideous discords to harmony. But it was this superposing of folk-songs on Gregorian tones that gave the start to polyphonic singing. The state of confusion into which ecclesiastical music had fallen by this means rendered it necessary that a reformation should be undertaken, and the Council of Trent (Sept. 17, 1562) enjoined on the Ordinaries to “exclude from churches all such music as, whether through the organ or the singing, introduces anything impure or lascivious, in order that the house of God may truly be seen to answer to its name, A House of Prayer.” Indeed, all concerted and part music was like to have been wholly banished from the service of the church, had not Palestrina saved it by the composition of the “Mass of Pope Marcellus.”

A visitor to Provence will look almost in vain for churches in the Gothic style. A good many were built after Lombard models. There remained too many relics of Roman structures for the Provençals to take kindly to the pointed arch. The sun had not to be invited to pour into the naves, but was excluded as much as might be, consequently the richly traceried windows of northern France find no place here. The only purely Gothic church of any size is that of S. Maximin in Var. That having been a conventual church, imported its architects from the north.

One curious and indeed unique feature is found in the Provençal cathedral churches: the choir for the bishop and chapter is at the west end, in the gallery, over the narthex or

porch. This was so at Grasse; it remains intact at Vence.

CHAPTER II

LE GAI SABER

The formation of the Provençal tongue – Vernacular ballads and songs: brought into church – Recitative and formal music – Rhythmic music of the people: traces of it in ancient times: S. Ambrose writes hymns to it – People sing folk-songs in church – Hymns composed to folk-airs – The language made literary by the Troubadours – Position of women – The ideal love – Ideal love and marriage could not co-exist – William de Balaun – Geoffrey Rudel – Poem of Pierre de Barjac – Boccaccio scouts the Chivalric and Troubadour ideals

WHAT the language of the Ligurians was we do not know. Among them came the Phœnicians, then the Greeks, next the Romans. The Roman soldiery and slaves and commercials did not talk the stilted Latin of Cicero, but a simple vernacular. Next came the Visigoths and the Saracens. What a jumble of peoples and tongues! And out of these tongues fused together the Langue d'oc was evolved.

It is remarkable how readily some subjugated peoples acquire the language of their conquerors. The Gauls came to speak Latin. The Welsh – the bulk of the population was not British at all; dark-haired and dark-eyed, they were conquered by the Cymri and adopted their tongue. So in Provence, although there is a strong strain of Ligurian blood, the Ligurian tongue is gone past recall. The prevailing language is Romance; that is to say, the vernacular Latin. *Verna* means a slave; it was the gabble of the lower classes, mainly a bastard Latin, but holding in suspense drift words from Greek and Gaulish and Saracen. In substance it was the vulgar talk of the Latins. Of this we have curious evidence in 813. In his old age Charlemagne concerned himself much with Church matters, and he convoked five Councils in five quarters of his empire to regulate Church matters. These Councils met in Mainz, Rheims, Châlons, Tours, and Arles. It was expressly laid down in all of these, save only in that of Arles, that the clergy should catechise and preach in the vulgar tongue; where there were Franks, in German; where there were Gauls, in the Romance. But no such rule was laid down in the Council of Arles, for the very reason that Latin was still the common language of the people, the simple Latin of the gospels, such as was perfectly understood by the people when addressed in it.

The liturgy was not fixed and uniform. In many secondary points each Church had its own use. Where most liberty and variety existed was in the hymns. The singing of hymns was not formally introduced into the offices of the Church till the

tenth century; but every church had its collection of hymns, sung by the people at vigils, in processions, intercalated in the offices. In Normandy it was a matter of complaint that whilst the choir took breath the women broke in with unsuitable songs, *nugacis cantalenis*. At funerals such coarse ballads were sung that Charlemagne had to issue orders that where the mourners did not know any psalm they were to shout *Kyrie eleison*, and nothing else. Agobard, Bishop of Lyons, A.D. 814-840, says that when he entered on his functions he found in use in the church an antiphonary compiled by the choir bishop, Amalric, consisting of songs so secular, and many of them so indecent, that, to use the expression of the pious bishop, they could not be read without mantling the brow with shame.

One of these early antiphonaries exists, a MS. of the eleventh century belonging to the church of S. Martial. Among many wholly unobjectionable hymns occurs a ballad of the tale of Judith; another is frankly an invocation to the nightingale, a springtide song; a third is a dialogue between a lover and his lass.

It is in the ecclesiastical hymns, religious lessons, and legends couched in the form of ballads, coming into use in the eighth and ninth centuries, that we have the germs, the rudiments, of a new literature; not only so, but also the introduction of formal music gradually displacing music that is recitative.

Of melodies there are two kinds, the first used as a handmaid to poetry; in it there is nothing formal. A musical phrase may be repeated or may not, as required to give force to the words

employed. This was the music of the Greek and Roman theatre. The lyrics of Horace and Tibullus could be sung to no other. This, and this alone, was the music adopted by the Church, and which we have still in the Nicene Creed, Gloria, Sanctus, and Pater Noster. But this never could have been the music of the people – it could not be used by soldiers to march to, nor by the peasants as dance tunes.

Did rhythmic music exist among the ancients side by side with recitative? Almost certainly it did, utterly despised by the cultured.

When Julius Cæsar was celebrating his triumph at Rome after his Gaulish victories, we are informed that the soldiery marched singing out: —

“Gallias Cæsar subegit
Mithridates Cæsarem.
Ecce Cæsar nunc triumphat,
Qui subegit Gallias,
Nicomedes non triumphat,
Qui subegit Cæsarem.”

This must have been sung to a formal melody, to which the soldiers tramped in time.

So also Cæsar, in B.C. 49, like a liberal-minded man, desired to admit the principal men of Cisalpine Gaul into the Senate. This roused Roman prejudice and mockery. Prejudice, because the Gauls were esteemed barbarians; mockery, because of their

peculiar costume – their baggy trousers. So the Roman rabble composed and sang verses, “*illa vulgo canebantur.*” These may be rendered in the same metre: —

“Cæsar led the Gauls in triumph,
Then to Senate-house admits.
First must they pull off their trousers,
Ere the laticlavus fits.”

Now, it may be noted that in both instances the rhythm is not at all that of the scientifically constructed metric lines of Horace, Tibullus, and Catullus, but is neither more nor less than our familiar 8.7. time. The first piece of six lines in 8.7. is precisely that of “Lo! He comes in clouds descending.” The second of four lines is that of the familiar Latin hymn, *Tantum ergo*, and is indeed that also of our hymn, “Hark! the sound of holy voices.”⁴

Nor is this all. Under Cæsar’s statue were scribbled the lines of a lampoon; that also was in 8.7. Suetonius gives us another snatch of a popular song relative to Cæsar, in the same measure. Surely this goes to establish the fact that the Roman populace had their own folk-music, which was rhythmic, with tonal accent, distinct from the fashionable music of the theatre.

Now, it is quite true that in Latin plays there was singing, and, what is more, songs introduced. For instance, in the *Captivi* of

⁴ So Virgil speaks of the soldiers singing as they marched, according to rhythmic music — “With measured pace they march along, And make their monarch’s deeds their song.” *Æneid*, viii., 698-9.

Plautus, in the third act, Hegio comes on the stage singing —

“Quid est suavius quam
Bene rem gerere bono publico, sicut feci
Ego heri, quum eius hosce homines, ubi quisque
Vident me hodie,” etc.

But I defy any musician to set his song to anything else but recitative; the metre is intricate and varied.

Now of rhythmic melody we have nothing more till the year A.D. 386, when, at Milan, the Empress Justina ordered that a church should be taken from the Catholics and be delivered over to the Arians.

Thereupon S. Ambrose, the bishop, took up his abode within the sacred building, that was also crowded by the faithful, who held it as a garrison for some days. To occupy the people Ambrose hastily scribbled down some hymns – not at all in the old classic metres, but in rhythmic measure – and set them to sing these, no doubt whatever, to familiar folk-airs. Thirteen of the hymns of S. Ambrose remain. His favourite metre is —

“Te lucis ante terminum,”

our English Long Measure. And what is more, the traditional tunes to which he set these hymns have been handed down, so that in these we probably possess the only ascertainable relics of Roman folk-airs of the fourth century, and who can tell of how

much earlier?

Now, in ancient days the people were wont to crowd to church on the vigils of festivals and spend the night in or outside the churches in singing and dancing. To drive out the profane and indelicate songs, the clergy composed hymns and set them to the folk-airs then in vogue. These hymns came into use more and more, and at length simply forced their way into the services of the Church – but were not recognised as forming a legitimate part of it till the tenth century.

The ecclesiastical hymns for the people, after having been composed in barbarous Latin, led by a second step to the vernacular Romance. The transition was easy, and was, indeed, inevitable. And in music, recitative fell into disfavour, and formal music, to which poetry is the handmaid, came into popular usage exclusively; recitative lingering on only in the liturgy of the Church. The Provençal language was now on its way to becoming fixed and homogeneous; the many local variations found in the several districts tending to effacement.

Then came the golden age of the Troubadours, who did more than any before to fix the tongue. In the twelfth century the little courts of the Provençal nobles were renowned for gallantry. In fact, the knights and barons and counts of the South plumed themselves on setting the fashion to Christendom. In the South there was none of that rivalry existing elsewhere between the knights in their castles and the citizens in the towns. In every other part of Western Europe the line of demarcation was sharp

between the chivalry and the bourgeoisie. Knighthood could only be conferred on one who was noble and who owned land. It was otherwise in the South; the nobility and the commercial class were on the best of terms, and one great factor in this fusion was the Troubadour, who might spring from behind a counter as well as from a knightly castle.

The chivalry of the South, and the Troubadour, evolved the strange and, to our ideas, repulsive theory of love, which was, for a time, universally accepted. What originated it was this:

In the south of France women could possess fiefs and all the authority and power attaching to them. From this political capacity of women it followed that marriages were contracted most ordinarily by nobles with an eye to the increase of their domains. Ambition was the dominant passion, and to that morality, sentiment, inclination, had to give way and pass outside their matrimonial plans. Consequently, in the feudal caste, marriages founded on such considerations were regarded as commercial contracts only, and led to a most curious moral and social phenomenon.

The idea was formed of love as a sentiment, from which every sensual idea was excluded, in which, on the woman's side, all was condescension and compassion, on the man's all submission and homage. Every lady must have her devoted knight or minstrel – her lover, in fact, who could not and must not be her husband; and every man who aspired to be courteous must have his mistress.

“There are,” says a Troubadour, “four degrees in Love:

the first is hesitancy, the second is suppliance, the third is acceptance, and the fourth is friendship. He who would love a lady and goes to court her, but does not venture on addressing her, is in the stage of Hesitancy. But if the lady gives him any encouragement, and he ventures to tell her of his pains, then he has advanced to the stage of Suppliant. And if, after speaking to his lady and praying her, she retains him as her knight, by the gift of ribbons, gloves, or girdle, then he enters on the grade of Acceptance. And if, finally, it pleases the lady to accord to her loyal accepted lover so much as a kiss, then she has elevated him to Friendship.”

In the life of a knight the contracting of such an union was a most solemn moment. The ceremony by which it was sealed was formulated on that in which a vassal takes oath of fealty to a sovereign. Kneeling before the lady, with his hands joined between hers, the knight devoted himself and all his powers to her, swore to serve her faithfully to death, and to defend her to the utmost of his power from harm and insult. The lady, on her side, accepted these services, promised in return the tenderest affections of her heart, put a gold ring on his finger as pledge of union, and then raising him gave him a kiss, always the first, and often the only one he was to receive from her. An incident in the Provençal romance of Gerard de Roussillon shows us just what were the ideas prevalent as to marriage and love at this time. Gerard was desperately in love with a lady, but she was moved by ambition to accept in his place Charles Martel, whom the author makes into an Emperor. Accordingly Gerard marries the sister of

the Empress on the same day. No sooner is the double ceremonial complete than, —

“Gerard led the queen aside under a tree, and with her came two counts and her sister (Gerard’s just-acquired wife). Gerard spoke and said, ‘What will you say to me now, O wife of an Emperor, as to the exchange I have made of you for a very inferior article?’ ‘Do not say that,’ answered the Queen; ‘say a worthy object, of high value, Sir. But it is true that through you I am become Queen, and that out of love for me you have taken my sister to wife. Be you my witnesses, Counts Gervais and Bertelais, and you also, my sister, and confidante of all my thoughts, and you, above all, Jesus, my Redeemer; know all that I have given my love to duke Gerard along with this ring and this flower. I love him more than father and husband!’ Then they separated; but their love always endured, without there ever being any harm come of it, but only a tender longing and secret thoughts.”

The coolness of Gerard, before his just-received wife, disparaging her, and swearing everlasting love to the new-made Queen, the moment after they have left church, is sufficiently astounding.

So completely was it an accepted theory that love could not exist along with marriage, that it was held that even if those who had been lovers married, union *ipso facto* dissolved love. A certain knight loved a lady, who, however, had set her affections on another. All she could promise the former was that should she

lose her own true love, she would look to him. Soon after this she married the lord of her heart, and at once the discarded lover applied to be taken on as her servitor. The lady refused, saying that she had her lover – her husband; and the controversy was brought before the Court of Love. Eleanor of Poitiers presided, and pronounced against the lady. She condemned her to take on the knight as her lover, because she actually had lost her own lover, by marrying him.

We probably form an erroneous idea as to the immorality of these contracts, because we attach to the idea of love a conception foreign to that accorded it by the chivalry of Provence in the twelfth century. With them it was a mystic exaltation, an idealising of a lady into a being of superior virtue, beauty, spirituality. And because it was a purely ideal relation it could not subsist along with a material relation such as marriage. It was because this connexion was ideal only that the counts and viscounts and barons looked with so much indifference, or even indulgence, on their wives contracting it. There were exceptions, where the lady carried her condescension too far. But the very extravagance of terms employed towards the ladies is the best possible evidence that the Troubadours knew them very little, and by no means intimately. Bertram, to Helena, was “a bright particular star,” but only so because he was much away from Roussillon, and —

“So high above me

In his bright radiance and collateral light
Must I be computed, not in his sphere.”

When she became his wife she discovered that he was a mere cub. Cœlia was no goddess to Strephon. So the privileged “servant,” worshipped, and only could frame his mind to worship, because held at a great distance, too far to note the imperfections in temper, in person, in mind, of the much-belauded lady.

A friend told me that he was staggered out of his posture of worship to his newly acquired wife by seeing her clean her teeth. It had not occurred to him that her lovely pearls could need a toothbrush.

William de Balaun, a good knight and Troubadour, loved and served Guillelmine de Taviac, wife of a seigneur of that name. He debated in his mind which was the highest felicity, winning the favour of a lady, or, after losing it, winning it back again. He resolved to put this question to the proof, so he affected the sulks, and behaved to the lady with rudeness – would not speak, turned his back on her. At first she endeavoured to soothe him, but when that failed withdrew, and would have no more to say to him. De Balaun now changed his mood, and endeavoured to make her understand that he was experimentalising in the Gai Saber, that was all. She remained obdurate till a mutual friend intervened. Then she consented to receive William de Balaun again into her favour, if he would tear out one of his nails and serve it up to her

on a salver along with a poem in praise of her beauty. And on these terms he recovered his former place.

Geoffrey Rudel had neither seen the Countess of Tripoli nor cast his eyes on her portrait, but chose to fall in love with her at the simple recital of her beauty and virtue. For long he poured forth verses in her honour; but at last, drawn to Syria by desire of seeing her, he embarked, fell mortally ill on the voyage, and arrived at Tripoli to expire; satisfied that he had bought at this price the pleasure of casting his eyes on the princess, and hearing her express sorrow that he was to be snatched away.

In a great many cases, probably in the majority of cases, there was no amorous passion excited. It was simply a case of bread and butter. The swarm of knights and Troubadours that hovered about an exalted lady, was drawn to her, not at all by her charms, but by her table, kitchen, and cellar – in a word, by cupboard love.

In their own little bastides they led a dull life, and were very impecunious. If they could get some lady of rank to accept their services, they obtained free quarters in her castle, ate and drank of her best, and received gratuities for every outrageously flattering sonnet. If she were elderly and plain – that mattered not, it rather favoured the acceptance, for she would then not be nice in selecting her *cher ami*. All that was asked in return was, that he should fetch her gloves, hold her stirrup, fight against any one who spoke a disparaging word, and turn heels over head to amuse her on a rainy day.

A little poem by Pierre de Barjac is extant. He loved

and served a noble lady De Javac. One day she gave him to understand that he was dismissed. He retired, not a little surprised and mortified, but returned a few days later with a poem, of which these are some of the strophes: —

“Lady, I come before you, frankly to say good-bye for ever. Thanks for your favour in giving me your love and a merry life, as long as it suited you. Now, as it no longer suits you, it is quite right that you should pick up another friend who will please you better than myself. I have naught against that. We part on good terms, as though nothing had been between us.

“Perhaps, because I seem sad, you may fancy that I am speaking more seriously than usual; but that you are mistaken in this, I will convince you. I know well enough that you have some one else in your eye. Well, so have I in mine – some one to love after being quit of you. She will maintain me; she is young, you are waxing old. If she be not quite as noble as yourself, she is, at all events, far prettier and better tempered.

“If our mutual oath of engagement is at all irksome to your conscience, let us go before a priest – you discharge me, and I will discharge you. Then each of us can loyally enter on a new love affair. If I have ever done anything to annoy you, forgive me; I, on my part, forgive you with all my heart; and a forgiveness without heart is not worth much.”

During the winter these professional lovers resided at the castles of the counts and viscounts. In the spring they mounted their horses and wandered away, some in quest of a little fighting,

some to loiter in distant courts, some to attend to their own farms and little properties. Each as he left doubtless received a purse from the lady he had served and sung, together with a fresh pair of stockings, and with his linen put in order.

“Love,” says Mr. Green, in his *History of the English People*, “was the one theme of troubadour and trouveur; but it was a love of refinement, of romantic follies, of scholastic discussions, of sensuous enjoyment – a plaything rather than a passion. Nature had to reflect the pleasant indolence of man; the song of the minstrel moved through a perpetual May-time; the grass was ever green; the music of the lark and the nightingale rang out from field and thicket. There was a gay avoidance of all that is serious, moral, or reflective in man’s life. Life was too amusing to be serious, too piquant, too sentimental, too full of interest and gaiety and chat.”

That this professional, sentimental love-making went beyond bounds occasionally is more than probable, for human nature cannot be controlled by such a spider-web system. It will break through. Every one knows the story of William de Cabestaing, who loved and served among others – for he was to one thing constant never – Sermonde, wife of Raymond de Roussillon, whereupon the husband had him murdered, and his heart roasted and dished up at table. When Sermonde was told what she had eaten, she threw herself out of a window. But is the story true? Much the same tale occurs thrice in Boccaccio; once of Sermonde, something of the same in the Cup, and again in the

Pot of Basil; moreover, the same tale is told of others.

This artificial theory of love was carried to the Court of Naples, and to that of Frederick II. at Palermo. It brought after it an inevitable reaction, and this found its fullest expression in Boccaccio.

“All the mediæval enthusiasms,” says Mr. Addington Symonds, “are reviewed and criticised from the standpoint of the Florentine bottega and piazza. It is as though the bourgeois, not content with having made nobility a crime, were bent upon extinguishing its spirit. The tale of Agilult vulgarises the chivalrous conception of love ennobling men of low estate, by showing how a groom, whose heart is set upon a queen, avails himself of opportunity. Tancred burlesques the knightly reverence for a stainless scutcheon, by the extravagance of his revenge. The sanctity of the Thebaid, that ascetic dream of purity and self-renunciation for God’s service, is made ridiculous by Ailbech. Sen Ciappelletto brings contempt upon the canonisation of saints. The confessional, the worship of relics, the priesthood, and the monastic orders, are derided with the deadliest persiflage. Christ Himself is scoffed at in a jest which points the most indecent of these tales. Marriage offers a never-failing theme for scorn; and when, by way of contrast, the novelist paints an ideal wife, he runs into such hyperboles that the very patience of Griselda is a satire on its dignity.”⁵

⁵ *Renaissance in Italy*. “Italian Literature,” i., c. 2.

CHAPTER III

MARSEILLES

The arrival of the Phocœans – The story of Protis and Gyptis – Siege of Marseilles by Cæsar – Pythias the first to describe Britain – The old city – Encroachment of the sea – S. Victor – Christianity: when introduced – S. Lazarus – Cannebière – The old galley – Siege by the Constable de Bourbon – Plague – The Canal de Marseilles – The plague of 1720 – Bishop Belzunce – The Revolution – The Marseillaise – The Reign of Terror at Marseilles – The Clary girls

AS has been already stated, Massilia, or Marseilles, was originally a Phœnician trading station. Then it was occupied by the Phocœans from Asia Minor. It came about in this fashion.

In the year B.C. 599 a few Phocœean vessels, under the guidance of an adventurer called Eumenes, arrived in the bay of Marseilles. The first care of the new arrivals was to place themselves under the protection of the Ligurians, and they sent an ambassador, a young Greek named Protis, with presents to

the native chief, Nann, at Arles. By a happy coincidence Protis arrived on the day upon which Nann had assembled the warriors of his tribe, and had brought forth his daughter, Gyptis, to choose a husband among them. The arrival of the young Greek was a veritable *coup de théâtre*. He took his place at the banquet. His Greek beauty, his graceful form and polished manners, so different from the ruggedness and uncouthness of the Ligurians, impressed the damsel, and going up to him, she presented him with the goblet of wine, which was the symbol of betrothal. Protis put it to his lips, and the alliance was concluded.

The legend is doubtless mythical, but it shows us, disguised under the form of a tale, what actually took place, that the Ionian settlers did contract marriages with the natives. But the real great migration took place in B.C. 542, fifty-seven years later.

Harpagus, the general of Cyrus, was ravaging Asia Minor, and he invested Phocœa. As the Ionians in the town found that they could hold out no longer, their general, Dionysos, thus addressed them:

“Our affairs are in a critical state, and we have to decide at once whether we are to remain free, or to bow our necks in servitude, and be treated as runaway slaves. Now, if you be willing to undergo some hardships, you will be able to secure your freedom.”

Then he advised that they should lade their vessels with all their movable goods, put on them their wives and children, and leave their native land.

Soon after this Harpagus saw a long line of vessels, their sails swelled with the wind, and the water glancing from their oars, issue from the port and pass away over the blue sea towards the western sun. All the inhabitants had abandoned the town. Dionysos had heard a good report of the Ligurian coast, and thither he steered, and was welcomed by his countrymen who had settled there half a century before.

But the Ligurians did not relish this great migration, and they resolved on massacring the new arrivals, and of taking advantage of the celebration of the Floral Games for carrying out their plan. Accordingly they sent in their weapons through the gates of Marseilles, heaped over with flowers and boughs, and a party of Ligurians presented themselves unarmed, as flocking in to witness the festival. But other Ligurian girls beside Gyptis had fallen in love with and had contracted marriages with the Greeks, and one of these betrayed the plot. Accordingly the Phocœans closed their gates, and drawing the weapons from under the wreaths of flowers, slaughtered the Ligurians with their own arms.

From Marseilles the Greeks spread along the coast and founded numerous other towns, and, penetrating inland, made of Arles a Greek city.

In the civil war that broke out between Cæsar and Pompey, Marseilles, unhappily for her, threw in her lot with the latter. Cæsar, at the head of his legions, appeared before the gates, and found them closed against him. It was essential for Cæsar

to obtain possession of the town and port, and he invested it. Beyond the walls was a sacred wood in which mysterious rites were performed, and which was held in the highest veneration by the Massiliots. Cæsar ordered that it should be hewn down; but his soldiers shrank from profaning it. Then snatching up an axe, he exclaimed, "Fear not, I take the crime upon myself!" and smote at an oak. Emboldened by his words and action, the soldiers now felled the trees, and out of them Cæsar fashioned twelve galleys and various machines for the siege.

Obliged to hurry into Spain, he left some of his best troops under his lieutenants C. Trebonius and D. Brutus to continue operations against Marseilles; the former was in command of the land forces, and Brutus was admiral of the improvised fleet. The people of Marseilles were now reinforced by Domitius, one of Pompey's most trusted generals, and they managed to scrape together a fleet of seventeen galleys.

This fleet received orders to attack that of Brutus, and it shot out of the harbour. Brutus awaited it, drawn up in crescent form. His ships were cumbrous, and not manned by such dextrous navigators as the Greeks. But he had furnished himself with grappling irons, and when the Greek vessels came on, he flung out his harpoons, caught them, and brought the enemy to the side of his vessels, so that the fight became one of hand to hand as on platforms, and the advantage of the nautical skill of the Massiliots was neutralised. They lost nine galleys, and the remnant with difficulty escaped back into port.

The besieged, though defeated, were not disheartened. They sent to friendly cities for aid, they seized on merchant vessels and converted them into men of war, and Pompey, who knew the importance of Marseilles, sent Nasidius with sixteen triremes to the aid of the invested town.

Again their fleet sallied forth. This time they were more wary, and backed when they saw the harpoons shot forth, so that the grappling irons fell innocuously into the sea. Finding all his efforts to come to close quarters with the enemy unavailing, Brutus signalled to his vessels to draw up in hollow square, prows outward.

Nasidius, who was in command of the Massiliot fleet, had he used his judgment, should have waited till a rough sea had opened the joints of the opposed ranks, and broken the formation. Instead of doing this, he endeavoured by ramming the sides to break the square, with the result that he damaged his own vessels, which were the lightest and least well protected at the bows, far more than he did the enemy. Seeing that his plan was unsuccessful, he was the first to turn his galley about and fly. Five of the Massiliot vessels were sunk, four were taken, and those that returned to the port were seriously damaged.

On land the besieged had been more successful; they had repelled all attempts of Trebonius to storm the place. When he mined, they countermined, or let water into his galleries, and drowned those working in them. When he rolled up his huge wooden towers against the walls, the besieged rushed forth and

set them on fire.

But now a worse enemy than Cæsar's army appeared against them – the plague. Reduced to the utmost extremity, the Massiliots saw that their only hope was in the clemency of the conqueror. Nasidius had fled. Now Domitius departed; but not till he saw that surrender was inevitable. Cæsar had arrived in the camp of the besiegers. Marseilles opened her gates, and Cæsar treated the city with great magnanimity. But, ruined by the expenses of the long siege, without a fleet, its commerce gone, depopulated by war and disease, long years were required for the effacement of the traces of so many misfortunes.

Now I must go back through many centuries to speak of a most remarkable man, "the Humboldt of Antiquity," who was a native of Marseilles, and who was the first to reveal to the world the existence of the Isle of Britain. His name was Pythias, and he lived four centuries before the birth of Christ. The Greeks had vague and doubtful traditions of the existence, far away in the North, of a land where the swans sang, and where lived a people "at the back of the north wind," in perpetual sunshine, and worshipped the sun, offering to it hecatombs of wild asses, and whence came the most precious of metals – tin, without which no bronze could be fabricated. The way to this mysterious land was known only to the Carthaginians, and was kept as a profound secret from the Phocœan Greeks, who had occupied their colony at Marseilles, and were engrossing their commerce. The Phœnicians of Tyre and Sidon, and of Carthage,

had secured a monopoly of the mineral trade. Spain was the Mexico of the antique world. It was fabled that the Tagus rolled over sands of gold, and the Guadiana over a floor of silver. The Phœnician sailors, it was reported, replaced their anchors of iron with masses of silver; and that the Iberians employed gold for mangers, and silver for their vats of beer; that the pebbles of their moors were pure tin, and that the Iberian girls “streamed” the rivers in wicker cradles, washing out tin and gold, lead and silver. But as more was known of Spain, it was ascertained that these legends were true only in a limited degree; tin and silver and lead were there, but not to the amount fabled. Therefore it was concluded that the treasure land was farther to the north. Not by any means, by no bribery, by no persuasion, not by torture, could the secret be wrung from the Phœnicians whence they procured the inestimable treasure of tin. Only it was known that much of it came from the North, and by a trade route through Gaul to the Rhone; but also, and mainly, by means of vessels of the Phœnicians passing through the Straits into the unknown ocean beyond.

Accordingly, the merchants of Marseilles resolved on sending an expedition in quest of this mysterious Hyperborean land, and they engaged the services of Pythias, an eminent mathematician of the city, who had already made himself famous by his measurement of the declination of the ecliptic, and by the calculation of the latitude of Marseilles. At the same time the merchants despatched another expedition to explore the African

coast, under the direction of one Euthymes, another scientist of their city. Unhappily, the record of the voyage of this latter is lost; but the diary of Pythias, very carefully kept, has been preserved in part, quoted by early geographers who trusted him, and by Strabo, who poured scorn on his discoveries because they controverted his preconceived theories.

Pythias published his diary in two books, entitled *The Circuit of the World* and *Commentaries concerning the Ocean*. From the fragments that remain we can trace his course. Leaving Marseilles, he coasted round Spain to Brittany; from Brittany he struck Kent, and visited other parts of Britain; then from the Thames he travelled to the mouths of the Rhine, passed round Jutland, entered the Baltic, and went to the mouth of the Vistula; thence out of the Baltic and up the coast of Norway to the Arctic Circle; thence he struck west, and reached the Shetlands and the North of Scotland, and coasted round the British Isles till again he reached Armorica; and so to the estuary of the Garonne, whence he journeyed by land to Marseilles.

Pythias remained for some time in Britain, the country to which, as he said, he paid more attention than to any other which he visited in the course of his travels; and he claimed to have investigated all the accessible parts of the Island, and to have traced the eastern side throughout. He arrived in Kent early in the summer, and remained there until harvest time, and he again returned after his voyage to the Arctic Circle. He says that there was plenty of wheat grown in the fields of Britain, but that it was

thrashed out in barns, and not on unroofed floors as in the sunny climate of Marseilles. He says that a drink to which the Britons were partial was composed of wheat and honey – in a word, metheglin. It is greatly to be regretted that of this interesting and honestly written diary only scraps remain.⁶

The old city of Phœnicians and Phocœans occupied that portion of the present town lying between the sea and the ancient port, and the walls cut across from the Anse de la Joliette, mounted the Butte des Carmes and descended to the head of the Vieux-port. The Butte des Moulins was the Acropolis, and on it stood temples of the gods of Carthage and Greece. The sea-face was formerly very different from what it is now. Cæsar speaks of Marseilles being washed by the sea on three sides. The sea has eaten away a very large portion of the peninsula. The cathedral, La Major, was not formerly on the quay; till the end of the eighteenth century its principal portal faced the sea. At the close of that century, so much of the town having been washed away, and so sapped was the rock on that side, that a doorway had to be opened on the landside. An old chapel existing in 1202 stood at a point now 250 feet from the land. Recent works, the formation of a succession of basins, have arrested this degradation of the coast, and have regained some of the lost land.

Marseilles lies in an amphitheatre, but this is only realised when the city is approached from the sea. To those arriving by rail it appears to be a town scattered over a series of hills, very

⁶ See Elton's *Origins of English History*. London: 1890, pp. 6-32.

irregular and of a very confused plan. All that portion of the town that lies south of the Vieux-port, about the Palais de Justice to where the hill rises, was formerly morass; the houses here have no cellars, and are built, like Amsterdam, on piles. Above the Bassin de Carinage rises the Church of S. Victor, built in the eleventh and extended in the thirteenth century. The towers and ramparts were erected by William de Grimoard in 1350. He had been prior of the monastery of S. Victor, and afterwards became pope under the name of Urban V. All this portion of rising ground to the south of the old harbour seems to have been the refuge of the first Christians. Excavations made in extending the basin laid bare vestiges of catacombs of a very early period, earlier, in fact, in some cases than the Christian era. In the fourth century the monk Cassian founded a monastery above these catacombs. It was destroyed by the Saracens and rebuilt, and became a vastly wealthy foundation. The monastery on one side of the port, and the cathedral with its appurtenances on the other, were not under the jurisdiction of the municipal authorities of Marseilles; but each had its own town of dependencies under separate government.

What remains of this famous abbey bears an aspect of a citadel rather than of a church. It is an extraordinary jumble of parts, and from without looks as if it were wholly planless.

When, and through whom, Christianity was planted in Marseilles, is unknown; for the tradition of the apostleship there of Lazarus, whom Christ raised from the dead, must be

dismissed as idle fable. The traditional tale is as follows, but there is no earlier authority for it than a legend of the twelfth century, and this is mere religious romance.

When persecution broke out in Jerusalem, Martha, Mary Magdalen, a Bishop Maximin, and a Deacon Parmenas, and Lazarus, took a boat and sailed merrily over the sea till they came to Provence. Maximin settled at Aix. Mary Magdalen retired to the cave La Sainte Beume, and Martha killed a dragon at Tarascon, and established herself in its lair. Lazarus remained at Marseilles, and became its first bishop.

The first bishop of Marseilles known to history is Orestius, A.D. 314; and not a particle of evidence worth a rush exists to substantiate the story of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary, having ever come to Provence.

The street called Cannebière leads to the Vieux-port. Cannebière means a rope-walk, and here were situated the workshops of those who supplied the vessels with cordage and sails. When the old port was being cleaned out, an ancient galley was found at a depth of fifteen feet, built of cedar wood, with coins earlier, contemporary with, and slightly later than Julius Cæsar.

It is perhaps not to be wondered at that not a scrap of ancient Massilia should remain above ground, not a fragment of city wall, of temple, or of amphitheatre, for the valleys have been choked up to the depth of eighteen to twenty feet, and the summits of the rounded hills have been shorn off. But to obtain some idea

of the past, the Archæological Museum at the extremity of the Prado should be visited. One room is devoted to the remains of pagan Massilia, another to the Christian sarcophagi discovered in the catacombs of S. Victor.

The siege of Marseilles by the army of Cæsar was by no means the only trial of that description the city had to undergo. The next most serious investment was that by the Constable de Bourbon, who had transferred his services to Charles V. and fought against his sovereign, Francis I. Pope Leo X. had stirred up the emperor and had effected a coalition of England, Austria, Milan, Venice, Florence, and Genoa, against France. Charles despatched the Constable de Bourbon against Marseilles, and he appeared before it on August 19th, 1524, but met with a stubborn resistance.

Furious at not being able to obtain a surrender, he ordered a general assault, and promised his soldiers to suffer them to pillage the town at their own sweet will. On September 25th the besiegers attacked the walls, managed to beat down a portion and form a breach, through which they poured exultant. But bitter was their disappointment when they discovered that the besieged had raised a second wall within, in crescent form, on the top of which was the garrison, armed with culverins, and that at the points of junction of the new wall with the old were planted cannon which, with their cross fire, could mow down all who rushed into the semilunar area. The Spanish battalions hesitated, but were urged forward by their captains,

and a frightful carnage ensued. The space was heaped with dead, and the baffled Constable, with rage in his heart, running short of ammunition and provisions, was forced to raise the siege and retire, on the night of September 25th.

But that which has proved to Marseilles more fatal than sieges has been the plague, which has reappeared time after time, becoming almost endemic. The unsanitary condition of the town, the absence of wholesome water, invited its presence. The magnificent works of the canal of Marseilles now conduct to the town the waters of the Durance. This canal was constructed between 1837 and 1848, extends a length of ninety-five miles, and is carried through tunnels and over aqueducts. The body of water thus conducted to Marseilles not only supplies the precious liquid for drinking and bathing, but also sends rills to water the gardens which would otherwise be barren. How necessary this great work was may be judged from the number of deaths at Marseilles at the outbreak of the plague in 1720, when from 40,000 to 50,000 persons succumbed.

Amidst the general despair, selfishness, and depravity that then manifested itself, the Bishop Belzunce, some of his clergy, and the governor of the town, showed noble self-possession and devotion.

“The physicians sent to Marseilles by the Government,” says Méry, “on arriving found in the place over 20,000 dead and nine to ten thousand sick or dying. The frightful spectacle so affected them that they could hardly eat. In

traversing the town, in places they could hardly step without encountering heaps of corpses. The plague-stricken felt a flicker of hope on seeing doctors approach, but this soon died out. Fathers and mothers dragged their children into the streets, and abandoned them after placing a jug of water at their side. Children exhibited a revolting lack of feeling. All generous sentiments had been paralysed by the hand of death. The mortality was so great and rapid in its march that the corpses piled up before the houses, and in the church porches, indeed everywhere, empested the air. In the heat, the bodies rapidly putrefied and dissolved, falling apart in strips. All were naked; the sick were covered by a few rags. Women half-clothed appealed for a drop of water, pointing to the fetid rill that trickled down the gutter; and as no one attended to them, they used their failing powers to crawl to it, often with their babes at their breasts, to dip their lips in the foul stream. Death was preceded by frightful spasms. The number of deaths increased to such an extent that it was not possible to bury the dead. Bewilderment took possession of men. Those of the inhabitants who had not been infected wandered about, not knowing whither to go, but avoiding one another. Others converted their houses into fortresses, as though disposed to maintain a siege; others fled to their country villas; others went on board ship; but the plague pursued them everywhere.

“In these days of calamity, the heart of man was shown in all its nakedness, and revealed all its baseness, ignoble inclinations, as well as its virtues and devotion. Those especially belonging to the lowest social beds, who live in

fear of the laws, gave themselves up to frightful excesses. The galley slaves, to whom was entrusted the burial of the dead, drew the tumbrils heaped with corpses with a mocking callousness; murdering the sick so as to rob them; flinging those ill along with those dead together, indifferently, into the pits dug to receive the bodies. The civic functionaries, the employés, even priests, deserted their posts, and the monks of S. Victor enclosed themselves within their fortress. But there were others, who presented a striking contrast to these men. Priests came hurrying to the empested town from all parts to shut themselves in within this circle of death. Their zeal was stimulated by the sublime self-devotion of Belzunce, bishop of Marseilles. The fear of death never chilled his charity. He hurried through the street, seated himself by the dying, bowed over them to hear their confessions, and the plague spared him as he executed these acts of humanity.”

Pope referred to this bishop in the lines:

“Why drew Marseilles’ good bishop purer breath,
When nature sicken’d and each gale was death?”

The pestilence, which had broken out in the spring, continued to rage till September, but abated after a violent storm, and disappeared in November. At the Revolution the merchant aristocracy did not relish the movement, fearing an attack on property; but the lower classes were maddened with enthusiasm for the “rights of man,” which meant the right to chop off

the head of every one of whom they were envious, and of appropriating to themselves the savings of the industrious. Marseilles furnished, from the dregs of its population, the bands of assassins which marched to Paris, screaming forth Rouget de l'Isle's hymn, which thenceforth took the name of the Marseillaise; and these bands were foremost in the September massacres in Paris.

The Reign of Terror at Marseilles itself, under the infamous Fréron and Barras, saw four hundred heads fall upon the scaffold, to the shouts of the mob, "Ça ira! Plus la République coupe de têtes, plus la République s'affermir."

At Marseilles, Joseph Bonaparte, when acting there as War Commissioner, met the sisters Clary. At his very first visit he had been billeted on the soap-boiler, and now, when again in the place, he lost his heart to one of the girls. Both were destined to be queens. Julie (Marie) was born in 1777, and married Joseph in 1794. In 1797 Joseph was sent as ambassador to Rome, and he took with him his wife and her sister Eugenie Désirée; she was engaged to be married to General Duphot, who was with Joseph in Rome. On the eve of their wedding a disturbance took place in the streets of the Eternal City, caused by a rising of the revolutionary party. Duphot ran among them, whether to encourage them or dissuade them from violence is uncertain; but he was shot by the Papal soldiery in the tumult. Six months later Eugenie Désirée dried her tears in her bridal veil, when she married the saddler's son Bernadotte, who was destined to wear

the crown of Sweden.

Joseph became King of Naples and then of Spain. Madame de Genlis, who knew both the young women, has a good word to say for them. Of Julie, the wife of Joseph, she says: —

“She always reminded me of the princesses of the Old Court, and she had all the bearing and carriage of the last princess of Conti. If Heaven had chosen to cause her to be born on a throne it could not have rendered her more suitable, with her graciousness, a great quality, which should characterise all princes, and which with her was perfected by being united to the most sincere piety, and hatred of all ostentation.”

Of Eugenie, who became Queen of Norway and Sweden, she says: —

“I had the honour to make the acquaintance of Madame Bernadotte, sister of the Queen of Spain, who then had all the charms of a graceful figure, and the most agreeable manners. I was struck with the harmony that existed between her amiable face, her conversation, and her mind.”

Addison, who sailed from Marseilles on December 12th, 1699 (Macaulay says the date should be 1700), and skirted the Ligurian coast to Genoa, was surprised and delighted to see

“the mountains cover’d with green Olive-trees, or laid out in beautiful gardens, which gave us a great Variety of pleasing Prospects, even in the Depth of Winter. The most uncultivated of them produce abundance of sweet Plants, as

Wild-Thyme, Lavender, Rosemary, Balm and Myrtle.”

In his “Letter from Italy” he writes: —

“See how the golden groves around me smile,
That shun the coast of Britain’s stormy isle,
Or when transplanted and preserv’d with care,
Curse the cold clime, and starve in Northern air.
Here kindly warmth their mounting juice ferments,
To nobler tastes, and more exalted scents:
Ev’n the rough rocks with tender myrtle bloom,
And trodden weeds send out a rich perfume.”

CHAPTER IV

AIX

A city left solitary – Foundation of Aquæ Sextiæ – The Invasion of Cimbri and Teutons – Defeat of the Romans – Blunders of the barbarians – Defeat of Cœpio and Manlius – Marius sent against the barbarians – Defeat of the Ambrons – Destruction of the Teutons – Ste. Victoire – The Garagoul – King René: Sir Walter Scott's character of him: his imprisonment: his failure in Naples: retires to Provence: character of his daughter, Queen Margaret – The procession at Aix – The Feast of Fools – Death of René: carrying off of his corpse – Destruction of the tombs at Angers – Cathedral – Museum

AIX is perhaps the most dejected of cities. At one time the life blood of the empire poured through it. The great road that left the Flaminian gate of Rome, passed along the coast of the Ligurian Gulf, crossed the shoulder of the Alps at La Turbie, and then, going through Nice and by Cannes, reached Fréjus. At that point it turned inland, left the sea behind, and made direct

for Aix. Thence it stretched away to Arles, and from that city radiated the routes to Spain, throughout Gaul, and to the Rhine. Through the market passed all the trade of the West; through it tramped the legions for the conquest of Britain, and the defence of the Rhenish frontier; through it travelled the treasure for the pay of the soldiery; through it streamed the lines of captives for the slave market at Rome.

But now, Aix is on no artery of communication. To reach it, one must go in a loitering and roundabout fashion by branch lines, on which run no express trains, in company with oxen in pens and trucks of coal.

Marseilles has drained away the traffic that formerly ebbed and flowed through Aix, leaving it listless and lifeless. But if we desire relics and reminiscences of the past we must not omit a visit to Aix.

Aquæ Sextiæ owes its foundation to Sextius Calvinus, in B.C. 124. The town has thrice shifted its site. The old Ligurian fortified town was on the heights of Entremont, three kilometres to the north – and traces of it remain, but what its name was we do not know. After the defeat of the Ligurians, Sextius Calvinus planted the Roman town about the hot springs; but the modern town lies to the east. After his victory over the Ambrons and Teutons Marius rested here and adorned the town with monuments, and led water to it by the aqueduct, of which fragments remain. Cæsar planted a colony here, and the place enjoyed great prosperity. It was sacked and destroyed by the

Saracens in 731, and but slowly recovered from its ashes. From the thirteenth century the counts of Provence held their court at Aix, and here lived and painted and sang good King René, of whom more presently.

Aix first rises to notice conspicuously through the defeat of the Ambro-Teutons by Marius B.C. 102. I have described the campaign at some length in my book *In Troubadour Land*, as I went over the whole of the ground carefully. Here I will but sum up the story briefly.

The Cimbri from what is now Jutland, the Teutons, and the Ambrons, driven from their northern lands by an inundation of the sea, so it was reported, more probably drawn south by desire of reaching fertile and warmer seats than the bleak wastes of Northern Germany, crossed the Rhine to the number of 300,000 fighting men, accompanied by their wives and children, and moved south. All Gaul, and even Rome, trembled before them, and the Senate despatched the Consul Papirius Carbo against them. Having occupied the defiles of the Alps, the Consul opened negotiations with the barbarians, who pleaded to have lands allotted to them. True to the unscrupulous principles of Rome, in dealing with an enemy, he proposed an armistice, which was accepted, and, profiting by this, he fell treacherously on the enemy by night, when least expected by the barbarians, who relied on his pacific assurances. But the Cimbri, though taken at a disadvantage, rallied and drove the legions back in disorder. On his return to Rome, Carbo was subjected to

accusations by M. Antonius, and put an end to his life by drinking a solution of vitriol. Instead of profiting by this great victory to enter Italy, the horde retraced its steps and turned towards Illyria and Thrace; after devastating these, they again reappeared in Gaul on the right bank of the Rhone, laden with spoils. Julius Silanus, governor of the province, hastened to block their course, and the barbarians again asked to be granted lands on which to settle, offering in return to place their arms at the service of Rome. Silanus referred the proposal to the Senate. The reply was one of insolent refusal and defiance. This so exasperated the Cimbri and Teutons that they resolved on crossing the Rhone and exacting at the point of the sword what had been refused as a voluntary concession. In vain did a Roman army endeavour to dispute with them the passage of the river. They crossed, fell on the Romans, and slaughtered them.

After this great success, the barbarians, instead of pursuing their advantage, spread through the province and formed an alliance with the Volci Tectosages, who had their capital at Toulouse. Then they hurried towards Northern Gaul. The consul Cœpio was sent to chastise the Volci for their defection, and he took and pillaged Toulouse. The Cimbri and Teutons, on hearing of this, retraced their steps and confronted Cœpio. But a year was allowed to pass without any decisive action being fought.

In the meantime a fresh army had been raised in Rome, and despatched to the aid of Cœpio, under the command of Manlius. In a fit of jealousy Cœpio retired to the left bank, encamped

apart, and refused to hold any communication with Manlius; and, that he might have an opportunity of finishing the war himself, he pitched his quarters between Manlius and the enemy. At this juncture, with such a formidable host threatening, the utmost prudence and unanimity were needed by the two commanders, this the soldiers perceived, and they compelled Cœpio, against his will, to unite his forces with those of Manlius. But this did not mend matters. They quarrelled again, and again separated. The barbarians, who were informed as to the condition of affairs, now fell on one army and then on the other, and utterly routed both. Eighty thousand Roman soldiers and forty thousand camp followers perished; only ten men are said to have escaped the slaughter. It was one of the most crushing defeats the Romans had ever sustained, and the day on which it happened, October 6th, became one of the black days in the Roman calendar.

This overwhelming victory opened to the barbarians the gates of Italy. It was, however, decided by them to ravage Spain before invading Italy. The whole course of proceedings on their part was marked by a series of fatal blunders. Accordingly they crossed the Pyrenees, but met with such stubborn resistance from the Iberians that they withdrew.

Meanwhile, Rome had recalled Marius from Africa, where he had triumphed over Jugurtha, King of Numidia, along with some of his victorious legions; and to him was entrusted the defence of Italy. He hastily raised a new army, hurried into the province, crossed the *crau*, and planted himself at the extreme western

end of the chain of Les Alpines at Ernaginum, now S. Gabriel, whence he could watch the enemy; and whilst there he employed the soldiery in digging a canal from the sea to the Durance, by means of which his camp could be supplied from Marseilles with munitions of war and provisions.

The Cimbri and Teutons, on leaving Spain, divided their forces. They decided that the Cimbri should cross into the plains of Italy by the passes of the Noric Alps, whereas the Ambrons and Teutons should advance across the Maritime Alps by the Col de Tende.

Marius remained inert, and observed the enemy cross the Rhone without making an effort to prevent the passage, to the surprise and indignation of his troops. The barbarians in vain attempted to draw him into an engagement. Then they defiled along the Roman road to the north of Les Alpines, passing under the palisades of the camp, shouting derisively, "We are on our way to Rome! Have you any messages for your wives and children?" Six days were spent in the march past.

With difficulty Marius restrained his men. Only when the last of the Ambrons, who brought up the rear, had gone by did Marius break up his camp. He had along with him his wife, Julia, and a Syrian sorceress named Martha. This woman, gorgeously attired, wearing a mitre, covered with chains of gold, and holding a javelin hung with ribbons, was now produced before the soldiery, and, falling into an ecstasy, she prophesied victory to the Roman arms. Marius now moved east, following the horde, keeping,

however, to the high ground, the summit of the limestone cliffs, and he came suddenly upon the Ambrons at Les Milles, four miles to the south of Aix. At this point red sandstone heights stand above the little river Are, and from under the rocks ooze innumerable streams. Here the Ambrons were bathing, when the Roman legionaries appeared above.

Marius saw that the Ambrons had become detached from the Teutons, who were pushing on to Aix. He had now no occasion to restrain his soldiers, who poured down the hill and cut the enemy to pieces.

Then he thrust on in pursuit of the Teutons. He knew the ground thoroughly. The road beyond Aix ran through a basin – a plain bordered by mountain heights, those on the north sheer precipices of yellow and pink limestone, those on the south not abrupt, and clothed with coppice and box shrubs. He detached Claudius Marcellus to make a circuit to the north of the limestone range, with the cavalry, and to take up a position where the road emerges from the basin, at its eastern limit. He, with the main body of his army, by forced marches outstripped the Teutons, he moving to the south, out of sight in the brushwood, and came out where stands now the town of Trets. Thence he advanced down the slope towards the plain, which is red as blood with sandstone and clay, and where were tile works, Ad Tegulata. The Teutons had already encamped, when they saw the Romans. An engagement at once began. Whilst it was in progress, Marcellus came down in their rear with his cavalry. The result was a rout

and a slaughter. Few were spared among the fighting men. Over 100,000 were slaughtered or made prisoners. Their wives and children, their camp, and all their plunder, fell to the victors. So great was the carnage, that the putrefying remains of the Germans gave to the spot the name of Campi Putridi, now corrupted into Pourrières.

A monument was afterwards erected where the fiercest of the battle raged, the foundations of which remain; and here was found the statue of Venus Victrix, now in the Museum of Avignon; and at Pourrières a triumphal arch was raised that still stands to commemorate the victory. On the crag to the north, commanding the field, a temple of Victory was erected that in Christian times became a chapel of Ste. Victoire, and the great deliverance in B.C. 120 is still commemorated by the lighting of bonfires on the heights, and by a pilgrimage and mass said in the chapel on March 23rd. A little convent was erected near the chapel, that is now in ruins; the existing chapel dates from only 1661. At the Revolution it was allowed to fall to decay, but has since been restored. The height of Ste. Victoire is noted as the resort of a special kind of eagle, resembling the golden eagle, but more thickset, and with "white scapulars."

It may be remembered that Sir Walter Scott has placed one of the scenes of *Anne of Geierstein* at the Monastery of Ste. Victoire.

Near the chapel is the cavern of Lou Garagoul:

"In the midst of this cavernous thoroughfare," says

Sir Walter, “is a natural pit or perforation of great, but unknown, depth. A stone dropped into it is heard to dash from side to side, until the noise of its descent, thundering from cliff to cliff, dies away in distant and faint tinkling, less loud than that of a sheep’s bell at a mile’s distance. The traditions of the monastery annex wild and fearful recollections to a place in itself sufficiently terrible. Oracles, it is said, spoke from thence in pagan days by subterranean voices, arising from the abyss.”

The pit is, in fact, one of these *avens* so commonly found on the limestone *causses*. The description is somewhat overdrawn, but Sir Walter had never seen the place, and all he knew of it was second hand.

With Aix, King René is inseparably associated, that most unfortunate Mark Tapley of monarchs claiming to be King of Jerusalem, Aragon, of Naples and of Sicily, of Valencia, Majorca, Minorca, of Corsica and Sardinia – to wear nine crowns, and yet not possessing a rood of territory in one of them; Duke of Anjou and Bar, but despoiled of his dukedoms, and reduced to only his county of Provence.

Sir Walter Scott pretty accurately describes him: —

“René was a prince of very moderate parts, endowed with a love of the fine arts, which he carried to extremity, and a degree of good humour, which never permitted him to repine at fortune, but rendered its possessor happy, when a prince of keener feelings would have died of despair. This insouciant, light-tempered, gay, and thoughtless disposition,

conducted René, free from all the passions which embitter life, and often shorten it, to a hale and mirthful old age. Even domestic losses, which often affect those who are proof against mere reverses of fortune, made no deep impression on the feelings of this cheerful old monarch. Most of his children had died young; René took it not to heart. His daughter Margaret's marriage with the powerful Henry of England was considered a connexion much above the fortunes of the King of the Troubadours. But in the issue, instead of René deriving any splendour from the match, he was involved in the misfortunes of his daughter, and repeatedly obliged to impoverish himself to supply her ransom."

In the Cours Mirabeau at Aix may be seen a statue of him by David of Angers, but it is worthless as a bit of portraiture; which is indefensible, as several genuine portraits of the king exist; one is in the cathedral along with his second wife, in the triptych of the Burning Bush; another in the MS. of Guarini's translation of Strabo, in the library at Albi; a third, in private hands, has been engraved in the Count de Quatrebarbe's edition of King René's works.

René has got into such a backwater of history that probably not many English folk know more about him than that he was the father of the unfortunate Margaret, Queen of Henry VI., sketched for us by Shakespeare in an unfavourable light, and more of him than what Scott is pleased to say in *Anne of Geierstein*. But no man has so taken hold of Provençal affection

as has René.

“If to the present day,” says a local historian, “the thought of this King makes a Provençal heart beat with tender love, it is due to this: that never was there a sovereign who showed greater consideration for his people, was more sparing of their blood and money, more desirous of promoting their happiness. Simple and modest in all his tastes, enjoying less revenue than most of the Seigneurs who were his vassals, he was to be seen every winter sunning himself in the midst of his subjects, who idolised him.”

Réné, Duke of Anjou and Maine, was prisoner to the Duke of Burgundy, when news reached him that the inheritances of his brother and of Queen Joanna II. of the Two Sicilies, had fallen to him. Married to Isabella, daughter of Charles of Lorraine, he had claimed that duchy on the death of his father-in-law, and in opposition to Anthony, Count of Vaudemont, nephew of Charles. The Count of Vaudemont was supported by Philip, Duke of Burgundy. René was defeated and taken prisoner, along with his son and all his great nobles. Conducted to the castle of Blacon, near Salines, he was there retained in captivity till he could pay an enormous ransom. It was, accordingly, whilst a prisoner that he heard the news of the death of his brother, Louis III., and of his adoption by the queen, and then of the death of Joanna, in 1435.

As he was unable to take possession of his kingdom of the Two Sicilies, he was obliged to transfer his authority to his wife, the Duchess Isabella, a woman of rare prudence and of masculine

courage. The absence of René from his kingdom of Naples gave rise to the formation of factions: one favoured Alphonso of Aragon, a claimant; another took the side of Pope Eugenius IV., who wanted to annex the Sicilies to the papal states; a third party favoured René, and this latter was the most numerous. But the King of Aragon was prompt and determined. Alphonso hastened to Naples, took Capua, and laid siege to Gaeta. Happily for René's party, the Genoese, who were jealous of Alphonso, forced him to raise the siege, and took him prisoner. Later, however, Gaeta fell before Peter, the brother of Alphonso.

At this time Isabella was making preparations at Aix and in the port of Marseilles for a descent on Naples. The Pope was induced to withdraw his claim, to lend her 4,000 horsemen, and to help her by hurling excommunications against the Aragonese. Meanwhile, King René, by promises, had succeeded in effecting his release, but on very harsh terms. He bound himself to pay 200,000 gold florins, and to cede several fortified places till his ransom was paid. His son, the Duke of Calabria, had been set at liberty the year before for a ransom of 25,000 florins. René had spent six years in prison.

Delivered from his long captivity, René hastened to Provence, where the estates found him 100,000 gold florins for the prosecution of the war. In April, 1438, René sailed from Marseilles for Naples. Unfortunately for him, at this time his trusted constable, Jacopo Caldora, died, and the king gave his place to the son of Caldora, a man of very different stamp, who

sold himself to the King of Aragon and threw every possible hindrance in the way of René, who was besieged in Naples, and sorely hampered by lack of money wherewith to content his soldiery. One day, as he was passing through the streets, a widow cried to him to give her bread for her starving children. René passed without a word. "If he will not feed them, I know who will," said the woman, and she hastened to betray to a partisan of Alphonso the secret of a subterranean passage into the town; in fact, the old aqueduct through which, nine centuries before, Belisarius had penetrated into Naples. The Spaniards poured into the town, and René had but just time to escape to a vessel in the bay. He retired to Provence, and there his wife, Isabella, died in 1453. He had her body moved to Angers, and erected over her a noble tomb, near one he had set up some years before to his old nurse. René fought against the English beside the French King, and was in the battle of Crecy. In 1448 his daughter Margaret had been married to Henry VI.

Shakespeare and the chroniclers have combined to blacken the character of this unfortunate woman. She is represented in repulsive colours, as unfeminine, revengeful, loose in her morals; and even her energy and fortitude are distorted into unnatural ferocity and obduracy. But we cannot trust the picture painted of her. The English people resented the marriage with an impecunious woman, and the cession of the duchy of Maine to the French as the price for her hand. They were galled and writhing at the humiliation of the English arms, in a series

of victories won by the aid of the Maid of Orleans. She was, moreover, placed in the unnatural position of having to supply, by her force of character, the feebleness of her husband's rule. The soft, feminine nature of Henry's disposition threw hers by contrast into undue prominence. She had penetration to discover, what was hidden from Henry's eyes, that the throne was surrounded by false friends and secret enemies. Considering the incapacity of the King, it is unjust to judge her harshly, if she strove with all her powers to save the crown imperilled by his feebleness. The situation in which she was placed compelled her to do that which is the worst thing a woman can do, to unsex herself, and that, not like the Maid of Orleans, in consequence of a Divine impulse, but from motives of policy. Inevitably much has been attributed to her for which she was not rightfully responsible. It could hardly be otherwise than that much in her way of life was inconsistent with her female character; a woman cannot play a man's part in the work of the world without detriment to her own nature; but this was forced on her by the helpless imbecility of her husband, and she was compelled by the stress of circumstances to take the first part in a struggle to save the crown, and to hand it on to her son.

After the death of Isabella, René married Jeanne de Laval, with whom he lived happily. He loved to walk about the country in a broad-brimmed straw hat, and to chat with the peasants; or else to amuse himself with illuminating MSS. and composing poems.

Louis XI. was his nephew, a crafty and cold-blooded king, and he took advantage of the inability of René to offer effective resistance to dispossess him of his duchy of Anjou. Thenceforth René, who had spent his time between Anjou and Provence, was constrained to reside only in the latter.

One great source of delight to him consisted in scheming showy public processions and tournaments, and in hunting up relics of saints. He instituted a festival at Aix to represent the triumph of Christianity over Paganism, that was to be repeated annually. At the head of the procession appeared the gods, with their proper attributes – Jove with his eagle and thunderbolts, Pluto surrounded by devils, Diana with her crescent, Venus in the scantiest of garments. Around their chariot trotted an assembly of lepers covered with sores and vested in rags. Then came a body of pipers, dancers, and soldiers. Next appeared the Queen of Sheba on a visit to Solomon; Moses with the Tables of the Law, and with gilt horns; round him a rabble of Jews hooting and cutting derisive antics, and dancing about a golden calf. Next came apostles and evangelists, all with their appropriate symbols, and Judas, against whose head the apostles delivered whacks, Peter with his keys, Andrew with his cross, James with his staff.

Then came a gigantic figure to represent S. Christopher, followed by military engaged in sham fight. Next the Abbot of Youth, the Lord of Misrule, the Twelfth Night King, and other allegorical figures preceding the Blessed Sacrament, carried under a daïs. Finally the procession closed with a figure of

Death mowing to right and left with his scythe. Each group of this interminable procession executed a sort of dramatic game designed by King René – the game of the stars, of the devils, and so on; and the whole procession moved, not only to the braying of horns, the beating of drums, and the shrill notes of the wry-necked fife, but also to the discordant clashing of all the church bells of Aix.

It was a matter of keen competition annually to get a part to play in the show. One man on a certain occasion was highly wrath and offended because he was not set down to the part of Devil. “My father was a devil before me, my grandfather was a devil, why should not I be one as well?” Possibly King René devised the entertainment to draw people away from their celebration of the Feast of Fools, a feast that existed in full vigour until it was finally put down by the provincial council of Aix in 1585, after René had vainly endeavoured to get rid of it. This astounding piece of ribaldry and profanity was everywhere, and every effort made by the Church to be rid of it had met with stubborn resistance from the people. In Dijon it was abolished by the Parliament in 1552, as the ecclesiastical authorities were powerless to end it.

The Feast of Fools was the carrying on of the old pagan Saturnalia, when on December 17th for a week all conditions were turned topsy-turvey. The slaves took places at table and the masters served; and the streets were full of riot and revelry. It was customary at Aix and Arles, and in almost every great church in France, from the New Year to the Epiphany, for the people

to proceed to the election of a Bishop of Fools. The election took place amidst buffoonery and the most indecent farces. The newly-elected was then made to officiate pontifically at the high altar, whilst clerks carried mitre and crozier, their faces daubed over with paint or soot. Some men dressed as women, women were disguised as men, and danced in the choir. Songs of the grossest nature were sung; and in place of incense old leather and all kinds of filth were burnt; sausages and black puddings were eaten on the altar. The last traces of these horrible profanities did not disappear till the middle of the eighteenth century.

But to return to King René. He died at the age of seventy-two in July, 1480, and according to his will, his nephew, Charles of Maine, took possession of the county of Provence under the title of Charles IV. But he soon died, and then Louis XI. annexed Provence, as he had Anjou, to the French crown.

René had desired to be buried at Angers beside his first wife, and Jeanne, his second, tried to carry out his wishes; but the people of Aix would not hear of the body being removed from their midst. The estates met, and sent a petition to Jeanne to renounce the idea of conveying the remains away from Provence. However, she gained the consent of the archbishop to the removal; but she was obliged to wait a whole year before the suspicions and watchfulness of the people of Aix would allow her to execute her purpose. Then she sent a covered waggon, with intent, as she gave out, to remove some of her goods from the castle at Aix; and during the night the body of the old king

was whisked away; the horses started at a gallop, and the corpse conveyed beyond the frontiers of the county before the people were aware of the theft. A noble monument was erected at Angers to contain the mortal remains of René. Unhappily at the French Revolution this, as well as the monument and statue of Isabella, his first wife, and even that of his dear old nurse, were smashed to fragments by the rabble.

The cathedral is an interesting church: the south aisle constituted the Early Romanesque church. To this was added the present nave in 1285, with apse. On the south side of the church is a charming Early Romanesque cloister, and on the north is a baptistry of the sixth century, but somewhat altered in 1577, containing eight columns of polished granite and marble proceeding from some demolished temple. There are two objects in the church likely more specially to attract attention; the triptych of the Burning Bush, where King René and Jeanne de Laval are represented kneeling before the Bush that burns with fire and is not consumed, and in which, by a curious anachronism, is represented the Virgin and Child. This triptych was painted, it is thought, by Van der Meire, a disciple of Van Eyck. The other object is the magnificent series of tapestries in the choir, representing the Life of Our Lord, which came from S. Paul's Cathedral, London, whence they were ejected at the time of the Commonwealth. The date of these tapestries is 1511, and they are attributed to Quentin Matsys of Antwerp.

The museum of Aix richly deserves a visit. It contains

bas-reliefs dug up at Entremont, where was the old Ligurian stronghold, taken by Sextius Calvinus; and these are the very earliest bits of Gaulish sculpture that have been found anywhere. There are also numerous relics of the classic Aix that have been unearthed in the town, and Christian sarcophagi sculptured with Biblical scenes.

In the town library is King René's *Book of Hours*, illuminated by his own hand.

CHAPTER V

TOULON

**Coudon and Faron – Telo Martius – Dye works
– Toulon made an arsenal and dockyard – Galley
slaves – The Bagne – The Red Caps – Travaux forcés
– Story of Cognard – Siege of 1793 – Carteaux
and Napoleon – Massacre – Expedition to Egypt**

THE precipices of limestone, Coudon, 1,205 feet high, and Faron, 1,790 feet, standing as guardians over Toulon, crowned with gleaming circles of white fortifications, effectually protect the great arsenal and dockyards of this place of first importance to France. Coudon looks out over the *crau* towards the Gulf of Hyères, and would effectually prevent attack thence; and Faron, standing immediately above the harbour of Toulon, could sink any fleet that ventured within range. Indeed, till these two fortresses should be silenced, Toulon would be impregnable.

Faron (*Pharus*), as its name implies, was formerly the beacon height to the *Rade*. During the night a fire was flaming on its summit, during the day moistened straw was burnt to send up a column of smoke. This language of signals communicated

to the population of the coast the appearance on the horizon of vessels suspected of piratical intent. The beacon of Faron communicated with other beacons on heights within sight of one another. The keeping up of these signals on points of observation was essential to the protection of the coast, and the archives of Toulon contain a series of agreements concluded between the town and the neighbouring places, for the maintenance of the watch-tower of Faron, as also that of Six Fours, one of the most ancient lighthouses of France.

Toulon, the Latin *Telo Martius*, was originally a Phœnician settlement for the preparation of the famous Tyrian dye, made out of the shell of the *murex*. The Latins called it the Telo of Mars, the God of War, because, as lover of blood, he was patron as well of the dye, which ranged through all the gamut of tints from crimson to blue-purple.

The town was ravaged successively by Franks and Saracens, and sank to insignificance; it did not become a place of maritime and military importance till the sixteenth century, when Henry IV. built the forts of Ste. Catherine and S. Antoine, and the two great moles that flank the port; he was the first to discern that the pivot of defence of Provence lay here. Louis XIV. confided to Colbert the reorganisation of the fleet; and for the purpose dockyards, workshops of all descriptions, were needed. The basins were enlarged and deepened, and Vauban received instructions to extend the quays, construct fortifications, surround the city with a series of star forts, according to the

system that has immortalised his name, and, in a word, make of Toulon the first arsenal of France. It was due to this that the place was able to withstand the sieges of 1707 and 1793. Toulon was, moreover, made the largest convict establishment of France; and the convicts were employed on the work of its defences, in excavating basins, and building quays and warehouses.

In ancient times – indeed, from the classic period – the arduous and exhausting work of rowing vessels was given to slaves and prisoners. No free man would endure the toil and hardship of the galleys. War vessels, merchantmen, and pleasure yachts were alike propelled by this unfortunate class of men. Jacques Cœur, the banker, had four coquettish galleys with gilded prows and oars, propelled by prisoners hired for his service. Each of these vessels had at the bows a sacred image, wreathed with flowers, of the saint whose name it bore. There was La Madeleine, S. Jacques, S. Michel, and S. Denis. Charles VII. seized them all; he did not leave a single boat to the fugitive merchant, whose only fault was that he had made the King of France his debtor to the amount of a hundred thousand crowns.

In a large galley as many as six men were required for each oar. Sweating close together, for hour after hour, not sitting, but leaping on the bench, in order to throw their whole weight on the oar, they were kept to their task with little relaxation.

“Think of six men, chained to a bench, naked as when they were born; one foot on the stretcher, and the other on the bench in front, holding an immensely heavy oar (15 feet

long), bending forward to the stern with arms at full reach to clear the backs of the rowers in front, who bend likewise; and then, having got forward, shoving up the oar's end, to let the blade catch the water, then throwing their bodies back on to the groaning bench. A galley was thus propelled sometimes for ten, twelve, or even twenty hours, without a moment's rest. The boatswain in such a stress puts a piece of bread steeped in wine into the wretched rower's mouth to stop fainting, and then the captain shouts the order to redouble the lash. If a slave falls exhausted upon his oar (which often happens), he is flogged till he is taken for dead, and then pitched unceremoniously into the sea."⁷

Jean Marteilie, of Bergerac, who was himself on the galleys about the year 1701, thus described the life: —

“Those who have not seen a galley at sea, especially in chasing or being chased, cannot well conceive the shock such a spectacle must give to a heart capable of the least tincture of compassion. To behold ranks and files of half naked, half starved, half tanned, meagre wretches, chained to a plank, from which they do not remove for months together (commonly half a year), urged on even beyond human endurance, with cruel and repeated blows on their bare flesh, to the incessant toil at the most laborious of all exercises, which often happens in a furious chase, — was indeed a horrifying spectacle.”

To be condemned to the galleys was not necessarily a life

⁷ Stanley Poole, *The Barbary Pirates*.

sentence. At first all such as were sent thither were branded on the shoulder with GAL, but afterwards this was changed to T.F. for Travaux forcés, or T.P. if for life; and each class wore a special coloured cap. Great was the indignation felt at the Revolution, on ascertaining that the red cap of Liberty was what was worn by one class of gaol-birds. A member of the Convention rose and demanded that this honourable badge should be removed from their heads; and amidst thunders of applause, the motion was carried. A special commissioner was despatched to Toulon to order the abolition of the red cap from the Bagne. Accordingly all the caps were confiscated and burnt. But the National Convention had made no provision for replacing the red cap with one of another colour, consequently the prisoners had for some time to go bare-headed. In 1544 the Archbishop of Bourges sent a couple of priests and two other clerks to the captain of the galleys at Toulon, and required him to put them to hard labour. But this was regarded by the Parliament as an infringement of its rights, and the captain was ordered to send the clerics back to the archbishop.

Men were condemned to the galleys for every sort of crime and fault. Many a wretched Huguenot toiled at the oar. Often enough a nobleman laboured beside a man belonging to the dregs of the people. Haudriquer de Blancourt, in love with a lady of good rank, to flatter her made a false entry in her pedigree, so as to enhance her nobility. There ensued an outcry among heralds, and for this De Blancourt was sent to the galleys.

As naval construction and science improved, oars were no longer employed, and sails took their places; the galleys were moored at Toulon, Brest and Roquefort, and acquired the name of Bagnes. The derivation is uncertain. By some it is supposed to be derived from the Provençal *bagna*, which signifies “moored,” by others from the prisons of the slaves near the Bagno, or baths of the seraglio at Constantinople.

Louis XVI. abolished torture, which had filled the Bagne with cripples. Thenceforth the Bagne ceased to be an infirmary of martyrs, and became a workshop of vigorous labourers. The Revolution of 1789 tore up all the old codes, but it maintained the galleys, only it changed the name of Galerien to Travaux forcés à temps, ou à perpétuité. No one formerly seemed to be sensible to the horrible brutality of the galleys. When Madame de Grignan wrote an account of a visit to one of them to her friend Mme de Sévigné, that lady replied “she would much like to see this sort of Hell,” with “the men groaning day and night under the weight of their chains.”

Furthenbach, in his *Architectura navalis* (Ulm, 1629), says that the convict in a galley received 28 ounces of biscuit per week, and a spoonful of a mess of rice and vegetables. The full complement of a large galley consisted of 270 rowers, with captain, chaplain, doctor, boatswain, master, and ten to fifteen gentlemen adventurers, friends of the captain, sharing his mess, and berthed in the poop; also about eighteen marines and ten warders, a carpenter, cook, cooper, and smith, &c., and from

fifty to sixty soldiers; so that the whole equipage of a galley must have reached a total of four hundred men.

The Bagne has seen strange inmates. Perhaps no story of a *forçat* is more extraordinary than that of Cognard, better known as the Count of Pontis de Sainte-Hélène. This man, who seemed to have been born to command, was well built, tall, and singularly handsome, with a keen eye and a lofty carriage. This fellow managed to escape from the Bagne, and made his way into Spain, where he formed an acquaintance with the noble family of Pontis de Sainte-Hélène, and by some means, never fully cleared up, blotted the whole family out of life and secured all their papers, and thenceforth passed himself off as a Pontis. Under this name he became a sub-lieutenant in the Spanish army, then rose to be captain of a squadron, and after the attack on Montevideo, gained the rank of lieutenant-colonel. Later he formed a foreign legion, and took part in the political struggles in the Peninsula. He affected the most rigid probity in all matters of military accounts, and denounced two of the officers who had been guilty of embezzlement. But these men, in their own defence, accused Pontis of malversion, and General Wimpfen had him arrested. He escaped, but was caught, and transferred to Palma, among the French prisoners. In the bay was lying a Spanish brig. Cognard proposed to his fellow prisoners to attempt to capture it. The *coup de main*

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