

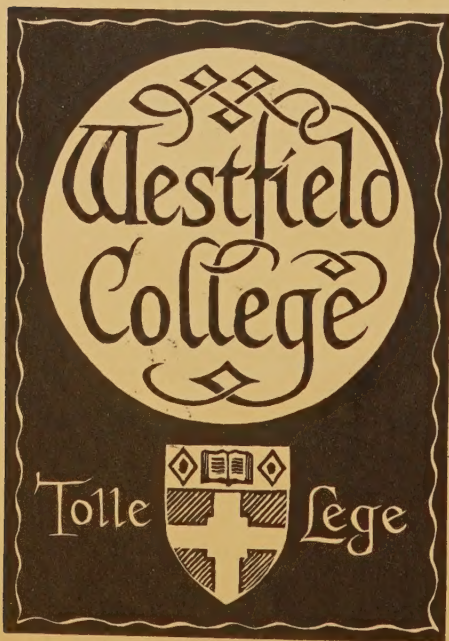


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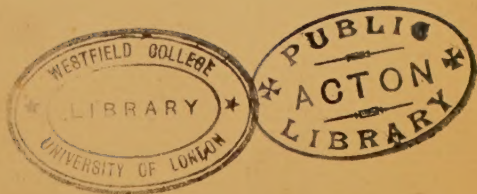
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THE  
HISTORY OF CORSICA

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BY

L. H. CAIRD



LONDON  
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## PREFACE

THE mere fact that Corsica was the birthplace of the great Napoleon affords a reason for some curiosity as to its history; but apart from a natural interest in the country and nation of a great emperor, the story of this beautiful island deserves more attention than it has hitherto received.

Of English writers few have had much to tell of Corsica, fewer still have attempted any detailed history of her sufferings and heroic struggles for liberty. The war against Genoa, practically resulting in the independence of the island under the rule of Pascal Paoli, excited some interest in England, and led to many pamphlets on 'the brave Corsicans,' and notably to Boswell's visit and his 'Account of Corsica.'

Various authors have described episodes in Corsican

## PREFACE

history, but to most English readers this page in the story of mankind is unknown, and the island is regarded mainly as the home of Napoleon and Vendetta. In the following pages an attempt has been made to tell the story, in the hope that it may arouse some interest in the fate of a country whose population, although not numerous, may yet once more lay claim to nationality and independence.



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I have not been able to see the works of Filippini or Peter of Corsica, but rely on Gregorovius for such extracts from both as are necessary in a work of this kind. Boswell, De Thou, Dumouriez, Gregorovius and Vincens are the authors I have mainly followed. In the names of individuals I have, as a rule, adopted the one under which the particular person can most readily be recognised, without adhering to any regular system or language.

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# The History of Corsica

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY HISTORY

THE historian of mediæval Rome (Gregorovius) in his delightful account of his wanderings in Corsica, quotes Seneca's bitter accusation against the inhabitants of the country in which he spent eight years: 'Their first law is to revenge themselves, their second to live by plunder, their third to lie, and their fourth to deny the gods.' Without going so far as Gregorovius, who roundly describes the philosophic statesman as a rogue, we may be satisfied with pointing out that Seneca's residence in Corsica was quite involuntary, and that, as he probably spent most of his time at Aleria, then the chief seaport, it is possible that he knew but little of the true qualities of the people, and that Divus Cæsar, apparently the chief object of his own worship, was scarcely a personage for whom the Corsicans, with their deep reverence for the sanctity of family life, could be expected to feel much regard. It must be admitted that they have always been revengeful, but they are, as a race, religious, hospitable and honest. What form their



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religion took in early times is unknown; but as they were visited before Roman days by Etruscans, Phœnicians, Greeks and Carthaginians, they had a fairly wide choice of foreign deities, and, if we may believe Seneca, rejected them all.

The first inhabitants are supposed to have come from Spain and Liguria, but the Mediterranean naval powers took small notice of their rights, and drew supplies of honey, wax, timber and slaves from the country, and fought amongst themselves for a monopoly of the trade.

The Greeks are said to have founded Alalia (Aleria), on the east coast, but their colony of Massilia in Gaul proved more lucrative, and Alalia was afterwards an Etruscan colony, until that nation succumbed to the superior power of Carthage.

The Punic government, systematic and ferocious, made a determined effort to subjugate the entire country, even going so far as to order the destruction of the vines and olives, and to prohibit the cultivation of grain crops, in order that the natives might be reduced to the necessity of resorting to Africa for food. It may be doubted if this order could be carried out, but it is clear that some civilisation and prosperity existed in Corsica at the time, and that the inhabitants were not well affected towards foreign rule.

B.C. 260-160.

But Carthage appears finally to have pacified the islanders, as they assisted the Carthaginian commander, Hanno, when the Romans under Lucius Cornelius Scipio invaded the country and destroyed Aleria, but made no permanent conquest.

Carthage, however, was eventually (B.C. 238)



## EARLY HISTORY

forced to cede her rights in the island to Rome, and the Corsicans were now left to oppose the growing strength of the great republic without assistance.

One Roman general—Claudius—they defeated, and compelled him to make a treaty with them, but the Senate refused to confirm it, and sent the unfortunate Claudius back as a prisoner. The Corsicans spared his life and set him at liberty, but he was put to death at Rome.

Other and more successful commanders defeated the islanders, but it was not until B.C. 227 that Rome could establish a regular government, Corsica being then placed, with Sardinia, under a prætor.

But the spirit of the nation was not yet quelled, and about fifty years later the prætor, Marcus Pinarius, was under the necessity of suppressing an insurrection which cost Corsica about two thousand lives. An annual tribute of one hundred thousand pounds of wax was then imposed, and afterwards doubled in consequence of another outbreak. It was not until B.C. 162 that the Corsicans finally submitted to Rome—nearly a century after the first invasion—and even then it is doubtful if their subjection was complete.

Although a certain number of cities have been enumerated as existing or founded under the Romans, yet of that great relic of their civilisation, the road, there have been found but scanty traces, and these only on the east coast between the ancient Mariana and Aleria. In this part the country is level and road-making not difficult, but the Romans do not

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appear to have made their roads across the island—almost a proof that the inhabitants of the interior remained practically unconquered.

Marius and Sylla were rivals in Corsica as elsewhere, but their rivalry was useful, the former having founded the city of Mariana, whilst the latter restored Alalia under the name of Aleria. Inland lay Cenestum, which may have been on or near the site of the modern Corte, and on the west coast Urcinium (Ajaccio). Boswell, quoting Diodorus Siculus, adds a town on the site of Porto Vecchio.

The island played no great part in Roman history. It was occupied by Sextus Pompeius during his attempt to resist the Triumvirate, and under the emperors was sometimes used as a place of banishment. It was in this capacity that it was for some years the abode of Seneca, the most distinguished of its unwilling visitors.

In the civil war after the death of Nero, Corsica sided with Otho, although the governor, being his enemy, tried to secure the country for Vitellius. The people, however, put him to death and sent his head to Otho, but he was too much occupied to suitably acknowledge the compliment.

Christianity doubtless was known in the island under the empire, but the subsequent anarchy left little trace of it until near the end of the sixth century, when, after the defeat of the Vandals by Belisarius, and some visits from the Goths and Lombards, Corsica became dependent on the Exarchate of Ravenna, and the Eastern Empire controlled the ports and levied very heavy taxes. It appears true that

## EARLY HISTORY

Christianity now made some progress in the island, Cap-Corse being called 'Sacrum Promontorium,' and regarded as the cradle of Christianity in Corsica. Some ancient hiding-places in the forests have been considered sometimes as the catacombs of these early Christians, sometimes as places of refuge from the Saracens. It is probable that they were used for both purposes.

When the Arab conquests stretched from Multan A.D. 700-800 to Morocco, and even the power of the Franks was endangered by their arms, Corsica could not hope to escape the storm. The first Arab or Moorish incursion is said to have been in 713, and was most likely a mere plundering reconnaissance. But, when the Mohammedan power had passed the Pyrenees (720), the annexation of Corsica was more seriously undertaken, and for centuries to come the island, in common with the rest of the Mediterranean countries, was a prey to the Moorish incursions which devastated the coasts and drove the inhabitants to the mountains.

From this time until early in the next century we have practically no record of what went on in the island, except the tradition that there were certain elective chiefs called 'Caporali,' and the probability that the Arabs, as was their custom, permitted the people to retain their own form of government, on payment of the tribute imposed on all nations that submitted to their rule without adopting their faith. As this is expressly stated of that part of France, which for a time was conquered,\* and as Corsica fell soon after its conquest, the tradition that the Caporali had some local power seems not improbable.

\* Mas Latrie, p. 6.

## THE HISTORY OF CORSICA

A.D. 752-759. When the Franks had expelled the Arabs from Languedoc, and King Pépin had presented the Exarchate of Ravenna to the Pope, the island may be said to have been nominally granted to Rome (it had formed part of the exarchate), but no attempt to conquer it appears to have been made until the reign of Charlemagne.

Most maps include it in his empire, and early in the ninth century several expeditions were sent to the island to fight with the infidels, or to defend it against them, a battle at Mariana, where his son Charles was victorious, being particularly mentioned.

816. Pope Stephen IV. found in Corsica a good outlet for the energies of the Roman nobility, and despatched Hugo Colonna, accompanied by Guido Savelli and Amondo Nasica, to drive the infidels out of the country. They were joined by the Caporali, and their efforts met with considerable success.

In 818 Pascal I., successor to Stephen, procured the assistance of the Count of Barcelona, who joined Colonna with seven hundred men, and helped him to defeat Nugalone, an emir or king ruling over part of the country, most likely on the east coast. Aleria and Mariana were conquered, and Colonna and his companions settled down as the feudal lords of the island.

824-1000. Hugo dying in 824, his son Bianco was made Count of Corsica, and taken under the protection of the Pope, which, however, did not prevent his being attacked by the Moors of Spain. His brother Cinarco was the founder of the Cinarca or Della Rocca family, in after days the most powerful of the Corsican nobility.

## EARLY HISTORY

For some time the Colonna retained their chiefship, Arrigo (Henry) Colonna being called Count of Corsica towards the end of the tenth century. He is best remembered under the name of 'Bel-Messere,' given him on account of his personal beauty and popularity.

About the year 1000 a quarrel about some land resulted in his murder, all his seven children being killed at the same time. His wife, gathering together her friends and retainers, avenged his death by the slaughter of the murderers, and burnt down the castle of Tralavedo, in which they had taken refuge.

It must be admitted that the story of the Colonna family as Counts of Corsica rests on no very sure foundation. But it is a fact that Stephen IV. and his successors took great interest in the fate of Corsica and Sardinia, whilst the declining power of the Caliphs, and the establishment of the various independent Mohammedan kingdoms, may reasonably lead to the supposition, that an island, always difficult to govern and not able to pay much tribute money, was neglected by the chiefs of the Mussulman world, who, so long as any foothold was retained there, could claim it as still under their dominion.

The geographical position of Corsica, easy of access from France, Spain and Italy, combined with the isolation of the Mohammedan emirs who had established themselves in the island, made it the happy hunting ground of knight errantry, where, to the glory of combating the infidel, was added the prospect of acquiring lands and lordship in an almost unknown country.

In the year 833 a great officer of the empire, A.D. 833-10

## THE HISTORY OF CORSICA

the Marquis Boniface of Tuscany, returning from a successful expedition to Africa, touched at Corsica on his way home. At the southern extremity of the island he built a fortress, which he named Bonifacio. Having thus asserted his power, he returned, as was his duty, to give an account of his adventures to his master. The pious Emperor Louis, either pleased with the account Boniface gave of his raid, or convinced that he meant to have Corsica with his leave or without it, granted the island to him and his successors as a fief of the empire. It thus came nominally under the control of the Tuscan marquisate, and so remained for over a century. But the Tuscan rulers interfered very little in local affairs, and the Corsican aristocracy had time to take root in the country.

Many of the families, which in later times became famous, derived their origin from Hugo Colonna\* and his companions; and unless we allow some reality to a personage whose name and exploits have been enshrined in the national songs and stories, we must conclude that these families preferred to claim descent from an ancestor who never existed rather than not to have an ancestor at all.

Corsica was claimed as part of the kingdom of Italy under Berengarius II., but the Emperor Otto II. gave it to his adherent, the Marquis Hugo of Tuscany, the race of Boniface being extinct. This

\* The name Colonna does not occur in Roman history until a much later period. I have left the name as I found it; but, whilst thinking that a certain Hugo became powerful in Corsica, and the founder of several families, I incline to believe that the name 'Colonna' has been attributed to him in error. The name became well known in Corsica in later times.



## EARLY HISTORY

brings the Tuscan supremacy nearly to the end of the tenth century, and although it cannot be said that the imperial authority was much regarded, still it is evident that the emperors by no means admitted that any Mohammedan power had sovereign rights in the island.

During this period the title of 'kingdom' seems first to have come into use with reference to Corsica, the emirs who were driven out being styled kings by the vanity of their conquerors. The island has been called a kingdom for several centuries, but there seems no reason, except a mistranslation of some Arab chieftain's title, for decorating it with the honours of royalty; and it is noticeable that its elected rulers (with one exception) have been known either as counts or generals.

In the Middle Ages, however, various princes, more or less known to history, were called kings from the fact that they claimed the island, in whole or in part, as forming a portion of their possessions.

Kingdom or no kingdom, the signori filled it with plunder and rapine; their castles rose on every available spot, and by the year 1001, when plague and famine impartially destroyed both gentle and simple, the country was divided between the nobility and the villagers of the mountains in the northern half of the island.

Of Mohammedan rule nothing was left except a shadowy claim of the Emir of Denia, in Andalusia, who was ere long to lose possession of Sardinia.

The feudal lords of Corsica, or 'signori,' as they were generally called, must have been, to a great extent, originally foreigners, the real Corsicans living

## THE HISTORY OF CORSICA

in the more inaccessible parts of the mountains. But in time they became fully nationalised and adopted every custom that could render them either formidable or popular. They cannot have been luxurious, they had to be brave, and must have been very fair specimens of their order, in an age when every free man with arms in his hands considered all Europe as a field open to his enterprise; and when, on the ruins of an older civilisation, a partly Christian and wholly disorderly aristocracy formed one dominant nation within and beyond the limits of the empire.

## CHAPTER II

### THE 'TERRA DEL COMMUNE'

NEAR the shore of the Gulf of Sagona, not far from the mouth of the river Liamone, stood the castle of Cinarca. This stronghold belonged to a family, sometimes called Cinarca from their ancestor Cinarco, the son of Hugo Colonna, but in after history better known as Della Rocca, under which name many of this family fought for their country and for their own rights, and some were found worthy leaders of the people in the cause of liberty.

But a lord of Cinarca in the beginning of the eleventh century was the indirect cause of the great village confederation which formed the Terra del Commune.

The old village communities in the mountains of the centre and north of the island, having their own lands and being determined to keep them, repelled all intruders and gradually formed a kind of league, which out of anarchy evolved a republic, with the rough draft of a constitution. It must be remembered that foreign dominion never appears to have been firmly established in the interior, and that even of the Roman

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road but little trace can be found. The impassable nature of the country, combined with the high spirit of its inhabitants, had protected the hill folk from anything more than a nominal submission to the successive foreign conquerors. But now, against a local nobility, foreign in origin and ideas, but gradually gaining strength and influence, the sturdy villagers found that they must combine or forego their freedom.

A.D. 1007. Their first parliament, if it may be so called, was assembled at Morosaglia, a village in the mountains about twelve miles north-east of Corte, and about the same distance from the coast. Their business was to discuss the means of resisting the lord of Cinarca, who had contrived to place himself at the head of the nobility, and seemed to aim at the lordship of the whole island. Sambucuccio di Alando was chosen as leader, or 'general of the people,' and he defeated Cinarca, and compelled him to retire to his own estates in the year 1007.

This victory over the aristocracy confirmed the freedom of the country within a kind of triangle, whose angles are to be found at Brando in Cap-Corse, at Aleria in the east, and Calvi on the north-west coast. Within these limits the people were free, and this tract of country was known henceforth as the Terra del Commune.

The Corsicans have always been in the habit of collecting together in villages, which are known as 'paese' or countries. The villages or paese of each valley formed collectively a 'pieve' or parish, and this ecclesiastical division became the basis of the

## THE 'TERRA DEL COMUNE'

administration in the Terra del Comune, under the presidency of Sambucuccio.

In each village a podesta or presiding magistrate, and other officials known as Padri del Comune, were chosen; and they, in their turn, elected a caporale, who was the chief officer of the pieve. The podestà elected the Dodici or Council of Twelve, the highest legislative body in the confederacy.

The natural formation of the country—ranges of high mountains, with but few passes, intersected by long valleys in which the villages are situated—rendered the pieves practically so many small states. In these the office of caporale tended to become hereditary in certain families, which thereby formed a new order of nobility known as the 'caporali.' This, however, was not always the case, and even where it was, many of the caporali remained attached to the constitution although violating it in their own persons. Freedom, qualified by their own usurped rights over their neighbours, became their ideal, and for some time their influence was on the side of the patriots.

The title of caporale has been attributed to elected chiefs of the people anterior to the arrival of Hugo Colonna, and it is said that they joined him and enabled him to rout and expel the Saracens.

It is probable therefore that Sambucuccio, in organising the administration, made use of titles already endeared to the people by old association, merely reducing to order and regularity their ancient system of local government.

After the death of Sambucuccio the signori took the opportunity of resuming what they doubtless held to

## THE HISTORY OF CORSICA

be their right—to rule the country and make war on their own account. Issuing from their castles, they indulged themselves in plunder and civil war, until the communal leaders called in a member of the powerful Tuscan family of Malaspina to put an end to the general disorder.

A.D. 1020. About the year 1020 Malaspina landed with a body of troops and defeated the turbulent nobility. Some of them submitted to the inconvenience of leading quiet lives, and were allowed to remain in the 'Terra'; the rest were driven out and settled in the south-western portion of the island. The Malaspina continued their protectorate for half a century, keeping some garrisons in the country and drawing from it a moderate revenue. The communal form of government was maintained under their protection, and the caporali continued to gain more and more power, whilst in the south and west the nobility took a firm grip on the land, dividing amongst themselves almost the entire country south of the river Liamone.

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the rivalry between Genoa and Pisa afforded opportunities to the nobles for increasing their power, and up to the end of the fifteenth century they retained it. But the inhabitants of the Terra del Commune, although allowing the caporali to usurp far more authority than had been originally intended, yet remained throughout the real Corsican nation; so much so, that we shall find their deputies arranging terms with Genoa, as the representatives of Corsica, early in the fourteenth century, and in the fifteenth overawing the nobles and treating directly with the Court of Milan.



## THE 'TERRA DEL COMMUNE'

Whatever power, Christian or Mohammedan, laid claim to the sovereignty of Corsica during the eleventh century, part of the island was certainly free and Christian, and the government there instituted was to be the ideal of future legislators.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PISAN PROTECTORATE

THE Pope had derived from the empire some rights over Corsica, and at the end of the ninth century a Corsican, Formosus (891-6), was Pope. We have seen how at the beginning of the same century the Pope gave Hugo Colonna leave to conquer the island. In the eleventh century, and later, this Papal assumption of overlordship caused much trouble and warfare, the Popes granting the sovereignty of the country first to one power and then to another. Had they been able or willing to govern it themselves, it is probable that the Corsicans, who are distinguished for attachment to their religion, would have been faithful subjects to the head of the Church as their civil ruler, and the island might have been found a sure refuge in times of trouble.

1070-1120. About the year 1070 the Moors returned to Corsica; but the Pisans prevented them from conquering it, and then endeavoured to retain it for their own benefit. The Genoese, however, alleged certain rights conceded to them by Benedict VIII. (1012-1024), and disputed the claims of Pisa. Pope Gregory VII. (1073-1085) sent Landulph, bishop of Pisa, to arrange for the formal submission of the six Corsican bishops

## THE PISAN PROTECTORATE

to the See of Rome. He succeeded in his task, and was rewarded, by the elevation of his bishopric into an archbishopric, with feudal superiority over the island of Corsica, not merely ecclesiastical supremacy over the bishops of Aleria, Ajaccio, Accia, Mariana, Nebbio and Sagonà. This grant of Corsica to Pisa was confirmed by Urban II. in 1098, to the great disgust of the Genoese, who had formerly assisted the Tuscan Republic to overthrow the Mohammedan power in Sardinia, only to find themselves excluded from that country by the jealousy of their former allies.

They now found themselves ousted from Corsica, which, from its situation, was an even more desirable possession than Sardinia for the Genoese; so they made the question of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction an excuse for objecting to their commercial and political rivals being granted the monopoly of power and trade in the island.

The Pisans had indeed acquired influence in Corsica by slow degrees, beginning merely as merchants. As early as the year 1000 they had built a church at Quenza,\* probably the oldest specimen of their architecture in the country. By the end of the eleventh century they were clearly paramount there, having trade, religion and government in their hands.

Gelasius II. confirmed the grant of ecclesiastical supremacy in 1118, and in 1119 the two republics came to open war, nominally about the bishoprics. In 1123 Pope Calixtus II. summoned both parties to appear before him at Rome, and decided in future to consecrate the Corsican bishops himself, a decision to

A.D. 1120-1

\* Valery, Bk. I., ch. lxviii.

## THE HISTORY OF CORSICA

which the Genoese deputies agreed, but the archbishop of Pisa refused to submit to this curtailment of his powers and the war was continued.

At last, in 1133, a compromise was effected, Genoa becoming an archbishopric, with supremacy over the sees of Mariana, Accia and Nebbio, whilst Pisa retained Aleria, Ajaccio and Sagona.

Meantime, the death of the Countess Matilda, in 1114, had transmitted the claim of her family over Corsica to the Pope, and although the Tuscan or Lombard family to which she belonged could never have claimed Corsica as an allodial possession, still her repeated grants of all her territory to the Church gave one more claim on the island to the Papal Court.

The emperors, of course, did not acquiesce in the alienation of feudal territory, and still claimed the island as part of the empire.

In 1158 the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa chided the Republics of Genoa and Pisa for having, by their intrigues, impeded his officers in his islands of Sardinia and Corsica.\* He afterwards confirmed the Genoese in all their possessions, however obtained; but this does not appear to have greatly added to their power. The three bishoprics of Aleria, Ajaccio and Sagona, which Pisa retained under the compromise of 1133, gave that republic a very strong position in the island. The government, as in Sardinia, was administered by officers called judges.† This title (*Giudice*) was much used in both islands in the Middle Ages, and in Sardinia the Pisans forgot their family names in the use of those of their jurisdictions. In Corsica the

\* Vincens, Bk. II., ch. i.

† Cambiagi, Bk. I.; Sismondi, *Répub. Ital.*, Vol. III., ch. xvi.

## THE PISAN PROTECTORATE

Giudice was renewed every second year, and the Pisan officials are said to have been benefactors to the people over whom they ruled. A foreign traveller, Gérard of Lorraine, Viscount of Strasburg, who visited the country about 1175, mentions its fertility and praises the good education, prosperity, hospitality and courage of the inhabitants.

During the twelfth century the Pisans were the rulers of Corsica, with Biguglia as their capital. The Terra del Commune existed as a state within a state, and the assemblies of the people were held in the plain of Morosaglia.

But Genoa was determined not to leave her rival unmolested. About the same period that the division of the bishoprics was agreed to an embassy was sent to Rome to obtain from the Pope the remission of a tribute of a pound of gold paid by the republic for the island of Corsica. There is no particular evidence that this payment had ever been customary, but from the remission of the tribute Genoese writers have inferred 'that the lordship which Genoa claimed over the island was not imaginary, and could be claimed in conscience and without sin.'\*

With or without sin, the Genoese did their best to ensure that their claims should not be imaginary. In 1180 Fulco di Castello, with a small fleet, sailed to Corsica and destroyed a Pisan castle on the coast.† This castle was apparently Bonifacio, which, towards the end of the century, was rebuilt by the Pisans and afforded their cruisers a safe retreat, whence they could prey upon Genoese commerce. The Genoese govern-

\* Vincens, Bk. I., ch. vi.

† *Univ. Hist. Mod.*, Vol. xxv., ch. lxxiii., I.

## THE HISTORY OF CORSICA

ment could get but little satisfaction from Pisa, the Pisans declaring that the ships from Bonifacio attacked their commerce just as readily as that of Genoa, and putting off the Genoese envoys by a promise to assist, at some future time, in the suppression of the pirates of Bonifacio. But Genoa would not wait, and took Bonifacio. Instead of destroying it, the Genoese decided to hold it. They strengthened the fortifications, and conciliated the inhabitants by granting them valuable privileges. This took place about the year 1195, and from that time the power of Genoa began to increase in the island. Genoese families settled in Bonifacio; and this place, once won, was never again lost. Pope Honorius III. found it advisable to confirm Genoa in this possession in 1217, thereby confirming himself as suzerain of the island.

A.D. 1200-84.

Meanwhile the Emperor Otto IV. had, in 1209, granted Corsica to Pisa,\* so that both the rival republics could cite high authority for their claims on the sovereignty of the island. But during the thirteenth century the power of Pisa was gradually declining. In addition to Bonifacio, and the three bishoprics granted them in 1133, the Genoese had many adherents amongst the Corsican nobility, whose excesses were to some extent controlled by Pisa. The Cinarca had returned to Corsica,† and they and many others were by no means particular as to which of the rival republics they acknowledged, so long as their own possessions were untouched.

The Cinarca indeed divided into two branches about

\* Gregorovius, *History of Rome in the Middle Ages* (trans. Hamilton), Bk. IX., ch. ii., *note*.

† Cambiagi, Bk. II.



## THE PISAN PROTECTORATE

1220, one of which held to Pisa and took the name of Della Rocca;\* but even they seemed to have been quite willing to recognise Genoa when it suited them to do so.

About the time that the Genoese settled at Bonifacio, a 'signor,' with the curious name of Ors' Alamanno, made himself conspicuous in that neighbourhood by his tyranny. He claimed certain rights connected with the marriages of his vassals, rights not unknown in other countries, and, in addition, he always exacted the gift of a horse, an ox, or some such valuable consideration.

A certain Antonio Piobetta had the misfortune to be subject to his authority; and he, proposing to marry, did not object to the gift exacted for the privilege, but strongly objected to the other 'rights' claimed by the signor.

By the offer of a fine horse he contrived to draw his avaricious lord away from his retainers, under pretence of showing the animal's paces, then, deftly throwing a lasso over his head, he put spurs to his horse, and Ors' Alamanno was quickly strangled.† It is said that Piobetta and his wife were afterwards treated with great respect by their neighbours, which is highly probable. The incident deserves mention, simply to show the length to which the signori could go in troublous times, and the promptitude with which the Corsicans could put a stop to such outrages. That particular abuse of feudalism known as the *droit du seigneur*, does not appear to have been again attempted in the island. It certainly was opposed to the ideas of the Corsicans, who are rightly

\* Cambiagi, Vol. I., p. 120.

† Valery, Bk. I., ch. lxxxi.

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sensitive to any attack on their personal honour, and still more so in the case of their wives or sisters.

During the thirteenth century it may be said that Pisa and Genoa were continually at war, and although the former republic is usually credited with the possession of Corsica until her downfall, after the battle of Meloria\* (1284), yet her power in the island was diminishing, whilst that of Genoa was increasing. The possession of Bonifacio, added to that of the three bishoprics, gave the Genoese the chance of acquiring more places in the island, while the constant state of war between the two republics gave some colour of justice to these additional acquisitions. Ajaccio was taken about (or before) 1270, which led to the Genoese extending their influence over Sagona. Here, however, they came in contact with Sinucello della Rocca, the lord of Cinarca, who was about the most powerful of the Corsican nobility. This man is known in history as Giudice della Rocca, the title of judge having been held in great estimation in his day. He has been described by his friends as a man of high character, a just judge, a prudent statesman, a brilliant soldier and a true patriot. On the other hand, he has been described as an insolent, greedy and unscrupulous brigand. Giovanninello, a wealthy lord of Nebbio, was at first Giudice's friend, but a ridiculous quarrel converted him into a bitter enemy. The signor of Nebbio had been offended at an accident which happened during a meeting between himself and Giudice. Two of their followers had some trifling dispute, in the course of which one of them picked up a little dog and threw it at the other,

\* Hallam, *Middle Ages*, ch. iii., Part II., quoting Villani.

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missed his man and hit Giovanninello. He, either furious at the accident, or perhaps seeking some excuse for a quarrel, refused all apology, and openly broke with his former friend. The little dog caused a great vendetta. This took place about the year 1275, and the lords of Nebbio and Cinarca were soon at war with each other, the former being, after a while, compelled to make his escape to Genoa. Soon he returned and fortified the spot which afterwards became the city of Calvi. Genoa knew well how to profit by these disputes, and Calvi speedily became a Genoese colony.

Giudice della Rocca now consented to govern his district under the protection of Genoa, but without paying much attention to the laws of his nominal suzerain. His influence extended as far as Bonifacio, where he greatly annoyed the inhabitants, who appealed to Genoa for help. In 1282 an expedition was undertaken to suppress this troublesome vassal, and Giudice, having been defeated, promptly transferred his homage to Pisa. The Pisans took him under their protection, and after some pretended negotiations with Genoa, reinstated him in his domains, and allowed him to govern the island as their vassal and officer. The Giudice of Corsica thus became the Pisan general in the island, and, being a Corsican, he was able to unite under his authority many of those who for a long time had been in doubt which of the two republics to support.

In 1284 the destruction of the Pisan navy at the terrible battle of Meloria left Giudice della Rocca exposed to the full power of Genoa. Pisa, no longer fighting for supremacy, but struggling for freedom,

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even for existence, soon passed out of the story of Corsica; not, however, to be forgotten by a nation whose happiest period was that in which the officers of the Tuscan Republic were loved and honoured, as judges of whose justice no doubt was entertained.

The Genoese speedily made themselves masters of the east coast, their position at Bonifacio and Mariana rendering this an easy task. Luchetto Doria, with a body of troops, occupied a large portion of the island, and imposed on the Corsicans an oath of allegiance to Genoa. But Doria had to reckon with Giudice, who had now become practically an independent ruler, although he still governed in the name of Pisa.

D. 1282-1312. For nearly thirty years he held his own, and the Genoese failed in every attempt to subdue him. His government was just, if severe, and many a tale is told of his even justice, which could forget the sacred claims of kindred when they conflicted with those of duty. But in old age he became blind, and was betrayed by his illegitimate son, Salnese, to the Genoese, who took him to Genoa, where he died in the year 1312. Unfortunately he had no successor. Most of his sons were, like the traitor Salnese, illegitimate, and they killed his only legal heir, and divided his estates between them.

With the capture of Giudice della Rocca the last remnant of Pisan authority disappeared. The frightful state of anarchy and misery to which the nation was reduced after his death has caused his time to be looked back to as a golden age. Even allowing for some exaggeration, he must be allowed the title of a true patriot. His sudden change of sides from Genoa to Pisa may seem questionable, but was not unusual

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in other countries under the feudal system, whilst the sincerity of his submission to Genoa at any time is doubtful. Whatever may have been his reason for adhering to Pisa, he never afterwards wavered. But for the battle of Meloria his influence might have prolonged a protectorate which was useful both to Pisa and Corsica; and the side he supported was certainly the one most likely to benefit his country.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANNEXATION TO GENOA

A.D. 1300-20. THE Republic of Genoa acquired, in 1299, a definite sovereignty in Corsica, the Pisan government formally surrendering all claim on the island. The signori gradually submitted, and the Terra del Commune sent a deputation to arrange terms with the Senate. It was agreed that taxation should be limited to 'twenty soldi for each hearth.'\* It seems that the deputies of the Terra del Commune made terms for the whole nation, and that the Senate admitted their right to do so, settling with them the financial conditions under which the Genoese rule should be accepted by the Corsicans. This implies the right of the people to claim independence in case of any breach of the agreement.

Although Pisa no longer opposed her, Genoa was not, during the first half of the fourteenth century, in a position to fully assert her power in Corsica. Calvi and Bonifacio were still her principal strongholds, and these places it was important to firmly attach to the cause of the republic.

It will be remembered that the latter place fell into the hands of the Genoese at the end of the twelfth century. It had remained in their power ever since,

\* Greg., Bk. I., ch. viii.

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and by the grant of privileges, and the settlement of Genoese families, had become a colony firmly devoted to the mother city. In the year 1321 the rights and privileges of the citizens of Bonifacio were solemnly recognised and embodied in a written contract, which was signed and sworn to by Brancaleone Doria on behalf of the Senate and people of Genoa, on the 11th of February. By this instrument the Bonifacians obtained free trade in all Genoese ports, and self-government in their own city, under the presidency of a Commissioner representing the Republic, who, before assuming office, was obliged to swear not to violate the rights of the community. A.D. 1321.

The constitution thus freely granted was faithfully observed, and for upwards of four centuries the republic had no more faithful adherents than the Bonifacians.

Although Pisa had retired from the conflict, Genoa was not without a powerful rival in her claim on Corsica. In the year 1295 the Pope, to further the interests of Charles II. of Naples, induced King James of Aragon to abandon Sicily, and afterwards gave him the islands of Corsica and Sardinia. 1295-1300.

King James was not at first able to do much in Corsica; but Aragon was frequently in a state of war with Genoa at this period, so that Corsica was never safe. The republic assisted the Sicilians, and was, for this offence, laid under an interdict by Pope Boniface VIII., and so remained until the settlement of the Sicilian dispute, by the recognition of Frederick (brother to the King of Aragon) as King of Sicily in 1301. About 1297.

In 1324 the Aragonese made good his claim on



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A.D. 1326. Sardinia, from which country he expelled the Pisans, and his neighbourhood to Corsica gave cause of alarm to Genoa. He did not, indeed, attack the island at this time, but his claim, founded on the Papal grant, gave some kind of legal support to those Corsicans who refused to own the Genoese as their rulers. It was not until after the lapse of some years that his successor, Alfonso IV., struck a blow in Corsica, during a war provoked by Genoa in 1330; but it became the custom for a man who disliked Genoa to pose as a supporter of Aragon. The war, however, was mostly carried on in Sardinia.

1328. In 1328 the bishop of Aleria assisted at the coronation of the Emperor Louis V. at Rome, in opposition to the commands of Pope John XXII. (at Avignon), who was the foe of the emperor.\* Genoa was at this time in the power of King Robert of Naples, on whom the 'signoria' had been conferred, so that the republic sided with the Pope, whilst Pisa, on the other hand, had submitted (with some reluctance) to the emperor. It would thus appear that the Bishop of Aleria, whose see was one of those formerly dependent on the Archbishop of Pisa, was acting in alliance with that state and in opposition to Genoa. As a Corsican bishop, his assistance at the coronation implies an admission of the imperial sovereignty over the island, and an absolute defiance of the Genoese, who evidently could not control him.

1348. Boccanegro (or Boccaneria) was the first Genoese governor of Corsica. He arrived in 1348, but only remained a year in the country. Tridano della

\* See Oscar Browning, *Guelphs and Ghibellines*, ch. vii.

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Torre, after an interval, succeeded him and ruled for seven years, until he was eventually killed. These two men both made some attempt at decent government ; but the country was left pretty much to itself during the greater part of this century, Genoa being content with the nominal sovereignty and actual possession of the principal seaports. No doubt governors were sent over, but their power was very limited until Tridano somewhat consolidated it.

During this period of anarchy the nobility regained much of their power, the caporali also becoming more and more the lords of their valleys.

Some as supporters of Genoa, and some as feudal barons, they ruled the greater part of the country, not much to its advantage. In fact, there was no real central authority after the fall of Giudice della Rocca.

Amongst his descendants, two brothers of the A.D. 1350. family of Attalla came into prominence about the year 1350, by their acceptance of the tenets held by the sect known as 'Giovannali.' This sect took rise first at Carbini, a small village in the Levie district (near Sartene in the valley of the Fiumiccioli), formerly prosperous, but ruined by the fall of the Giovannali.

They were remarkable, both in clothing and manners. They preached community of goods, obedience to a certain rule or misrule, and absolute association in one great family, having their women and children in common.

They were joined by many of the signori (a curious proof of the fearful anarchy and misery which must have prevailed), and, under the leader-

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ship of Paul and Henry d'Attalla, acquired a good deal of influence.

But in a country where the sanctity of the family tie is so strongly upheld by the affections and pride of the people, such doctrines could not prevail long. The sect was, of course, excommunicated by the Pope, Innocent VI., as soon as he became aware of its existence; and the 'crusaders' sent by him were actively assisted by the majority of the people amongst whom the Giovannali had endeavoured to spread their doctrines. The Giovannali were defeated at Alesani, and suppressed by the simple process of putting to death as many as could be found.

Besides this sect of communists, another strange source of mischief deserves mention.

In the pieve of Rogna there lived two men, not remarkable either for wealth or position, named Cagionaccio and Ristiagnaccio.\* These men quarrelled. Their quarrel was taken up by their friends and spread throughout the pieve. Gradually the scope of this dispute widened, until two parties, called Cagionacci and Ristiagnacci, divided the whole nation; and frequent contests took place between them, although they were probably ignorant of the cause of their mutual enmity.

The Genoese power was slowly extending, in reality as well as in name, while the Corsicans exhausted themselves in killing each other.

A.D. 1380-92. In the year 1380, Lionello Lomellino, then governor of Corsica, finding Biguglia (which had hitherto been the seat of government) not quite so safe as he could have wished, constructed near the

\* Cambiagi, Vol. I., p. 298.

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sea a fortress from which grew the city of Bastia. This governor seems to have spent some years in the island, for we find him still there in 1392, when Arrigo della Rocca landed as the representative of the King of Aragon. The house of Cinarca had been the source of more than one noble family. Amongst them the Della Rocca had already produced the famous Giudice. Guglielmo della Rocca had been killed fighting against Genoa, and his son Arrigo continued the struggle. Retiring to Spain, he set to work to persuade the King of Aragon to assert his rather doubtful rights over Corsica. King John was willing to authorise any attempt to undermine the power of Genoa, and Arrigo was allowed to style himself his officer.

He landed in 1392, and took the castle of Cinarca. A.D. 1392-140 Lomellino and his colleague Tortorino assembled the deputies of the people at Corte, to consider how to defeat him. But while they deliberated Arrigo marched across the island and stormed Biguglia, still the official capital. There he assembled the people and caused himself to be proclaimed Count of Corsica. The governors fled, and only Calvi and Bonifacio owned the sway of the republic.

Arrigo was now ruler of Corsica, and his government, although severe, was popular. A rising in Cap-Corse, where several families were of Genoese origin, was suppressed. The republic had many other matters to attend to and seemed on the point of abandoning the island altogether.

But the nobles of Genoa were then active and ambitious. Deprived of the highest posts in the

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republic, they still served their country; and men were found ready to venture something for the retention of an island which had already cost much, both in blood and money. An association was formed, called 'Mahona,' which comprised Magnera, Tortorino, Fisco, Taruffo and Lomellino, all five being nominally joint-governors of Corsica.

A.D. 1394.

They raised a thousand men and invaded the country, counting on the aid of such Corsicans as were discontented with the count's government. Some help they got, but could not effect much, and presently came to terms. But Arrigo, on the pretext that they broke their treaty, was soon again in arms and drove the 'Mahona' out of the country. Another effort on their part, reinforced by the republic, turned the tables, and Arrigo had to retire to Aragon. The king gave him two ships and some troops, and he returned after a very short absence, captured the Genoese commander, and was once more master of the whole island, with the exception of Calvi and Bonifacio.

1396.

The kings of Aragon had experienced the determined hostility of Genoa; throughout the century the republic had persistently opposed them in Sardinia. King Martin, finding Corsica in possession of his lieutenant, Arrigo della Rocca, when he visited Sardinia in 1396, sent garrisons for the fortresses held by his adherents. During the rest of his reign, however, the affairs of his own kingdom and of Sicily and Sardinia kept him fully occupied, so that the Aragonese suzerainty over Corsica was merely nominal, if that.

Arrigo della Rocca governed, but did not proclaim himself independent, although his government practi-

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cally was so. His rule lasted until the close of the century, when he died suddenly at Vizzavona, not without suspicion of poison. A.D. 1400 (or 1401)

The city of Calvi narrowly escaped capture about this time, but was preserved to the republic by the efforts of a young man of the Baglioni family. He, finding that certain influential citizens meditated surrendering the place to the Aragonese party, raised the populace and put the would-be traitors to death. From the cry of 'Liberty!' raised by him and his companions, came the honourable surname of 'Libertà,' since borne by his family. But we may doubt if the Corsican nation as a whole understood the word in the sense that it bore to the citizens of Calvi or of Bonifacio.

In the beginning of the fifteenth century the affairs of Genoa were in a bad state. The fourth dogeship of Antoniotto Adorno had come to an end in 1396, when the office of doge was abolished and Charles VI. of France acknowledged as suzerain. He appointed a governor, and in 1400 the old office of Captain of the People was restored, only to be again abolished to make way for another French governor. Not until 1413 was the office of doge restored, and during this period of distress the Genoese were unable to accomplish much in Corsica. 1396-1413

After the death of Arrigo della Rocca the Corsicans had some hopes from France; but the French Government appointed Lionello Lomellino count of the island. This man, a former governor and a member of the 'Mahona,' being now backed by the power of France, quickly made himself unpopular by the harshness of his rule. 1401-16.

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Arrigo della Rocca had left a natural son and daughter, known as Francesco and Violanta della Rocca, but his nephew, Vincentello d'Istria, was regarded by the nation as his legitimate successor. He had been from his youth in the service of Aragon, and devoted himself to the congenial task of preying upon the Genoese commerce, whereby he became well known as a successful corsair. (The accusation of piracy was often brought against the Corsicans in the Middle Ages, but it is doubtful if they were any worse than the Genoese and others in this respect.)

Francesco della Rocca joined the Genoese party, and was appointed governor of the Terra del Comune under Count Lomellino. But he was opposed by the greater part of the community, and had little power, whilst he shared the count's unpopularity. The latter, carrying out his former project of obtaining a new residence safer than Biguglia, enlarged Bastia and made it the capital. Unfortunately, the Genoese administration in Corsica had already become corrupt. The governors were systematic oppressors of the people, and did not hesitate at any crime to rid themselves of real or suspected enemies. Moreover, their policy with regard to Genoese families settled in the island was not calculated to make them good subjects. Jealousy and contempt drove many into the national party, in which we find, from time to time, such names as Gentili and even Grimaldi, one of the oldest noble families of Genoa.

Boucicaut, the French governor of Genoa, endeavoured to control the excesses of the Genoese officers in Corsica, and limited their term of office



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to five years, but he was unable to effect much good for the oppressed nation.

Vincentello d'Istria determined to take advantage of the prevailing discontent, and arrived in the Gulf of Sagona. Thence, following his uncle's example, he marched to Cinarca, and afterwards to Biguglia, where he assembled the people and was proclaimed Count of Corsica. Francesco della Rocca was killed; his sister Violanta made a courageous effort to carry on the struggle, but failed. Vincentello took Bastia (about 1410) and maintained his authority for some years. Fregoso, brother to the Doge of Genoa and governor designate of Corsica, besieged him at Cinarca, but was defeated, in 1416. Lomellino simply disappeared.

A revolt of some of the nobility who joined the Genoese party drove Vincentello from power for a short time, but he was soon back again with reinforcements from Aragon, and reconquered the entire island, except Calvi and Bonifacio. A.D. 1416-20.

Alphonso V., King of Aragon, thought the state of affairs now warranted the assertion of his claim to the kingdom of Corsica, and accordingly he invaded the island in 1420 with a fleet and ten thousand men. Vincentello had already conquered all but Calvi and Bonifacio. The first-named city was soon taken by surprise, but the latter still remained to be taken. The king and Vincentello directed the operations, and the siege began in August and lasted until January 1421, the place being invested both by land and sea. A bombardment from a hill to the north of the town, as well as from the ships, destroyed a great part of the fortifications. An

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assault was then made, and for three days the garrison had to repel the successive attacks of the Spaniards, fighting under the eye of their king. But the assault was repulsed. Then the king endeavoured to bring the inhabitants to terms, at the same time pressing the siege and reducing them to great distress, their provisions being, as time went on, almost entirely consumed. While the siege was in progress the king received a message from the Queen of Naples, who offered to adopt him as her son and successor. But he was loth to quit Corsica without reducing Bonifacio.

A small vessel escaped from the harbour and took news of the extremity of Bonifacio to the Senate at Genoa. That city was suffering from the plague, and the Genoese seemed unable to help their colony. But Fregoso, the doge, was determined to do his utmost to save the faithful city. It had been arranged that the place should surrender, unless relieved by a certain date in December, and Cataccioli, the Bonifacian messenger, returned with an assurance that relief should come as quickly as possible. The doge pawned his plate and jewels to raise money, and equipped a small fleet, which was loaded with provisions. His brother, John Fregoso, was entrusted with the command, and started, with fifteen hundred men, to relieve a place besieged by ten thousand. Before he could arrive the time agreed on for the surrender had come; but the women of Bonifacio, showing themselves on the walls attired in armour, played the part of a Genoese force said to have arrived during the night, and the city still held out.

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Women, monks, priests and children joined in this heroic defence, and cheerfully endured every hardship. When Fregoso arrived with his small fleet, he found the entrance to the harbour blocked by galleys chained together ; but he advanced, broke the chain, forced his way through the besieging fleet and landed his supplies. Then he threw the Spanish fleet into confusion with a fireship, and made his way back to Genoa. Bonifacio was saved. The king reluctantly raised the siege in January 1421. A.D. 1421-34. Leaving Vincentello d'Istria as his viceroy, Alphonso departed to seek an Italian kingdom, and made no further attempt to retain Corsica.

In the Terra del Commune the caporali had gradually increased their power, and were now regarded rather as an order of the nobility than as tribunes of the people. They and some of the great landed proprietors, after the failure of the King of Aragon to take Bonifacio, leant more and more to the Genoese faction. Calvi was recovered by the republic, and the power of Vincentello declined. Gradually the Genoese and the party on their side increased their influence, until finally Vincentello was forced to retire to Cinarca, the ancient seat of his mother's family. Biguglia was surrendered to Simon da Mare, one of the Genoese proprietors in the north, owing to the anger of the inhabitants. Vincentello had abducted a girl from the town, and her friends avenged the insult by joining his enemies. Finally he tried to escape by sea, but was captured, taken to Genoa, and there beheaded in 1434.

The King of Aragon was not in a position to

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help his viceroy. He was at the time at war with Milan and Genoa (the republic being then under the protection of the Duke of Milan), and was defeated and taken prisoner by their combined forces. The alliance which he then formed with the duke resulted in the Genoese breaking with the latter and declaring war against both, a circumstance little to the advantage of a man whom they hated both as a rebel and as an officer of their bitterest enemy.

Bastia and Corte were both strengthened as fortresses by Vincentello d'Istria. The former was destined to be the seat of the Genoese government in the country, but the latter, although often changing hands, remained the true capital of Corsica until the end.

For upwards of three centuries to come the Genoese were never again so nearly driven out of the island. In fact, when Vincentello was conquered, Corsica was annexed and became a Genoese possession.

## CHAPTER V

### THE BANK OF ST GEORGE

AFTER the death of Vincentello d'Istria several of the A.D. 1434-50. leading Corsican families competed with each other for supremacy. The chiefs of the Mare, Istria, Leca and Rocca families all wanted the title of Count of Corsica, and they threw the whole community into confusion.

At Genoa, in 1436, Thomas Fregoso, the doge under whose auspices the defence of Bonifacio took place, regained his power, but was constantly harassed by his rivals the Adorni. From that date until 1488 every doge of Genoa was either a Fregoso or an Adorno. These two families were, in fact, in a constant state of war, and although they could on occasion combine (as when in 1461 they expelled the French), their rivalry was productive of great hurt to the republic. In Corsica the Adorno and Fregoso factions divided the nation into hostile camps. In 1443 an attempt was made to place the country under the protection of the Pope, but without success. In the Terra del Commune Mariano da Gaggio was elected general of the people, and his first enterprise was against the caporali, many of whose strongholds he destroyed, and declared their office abolished. But they joined the Adorno faction and were not easily

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suppressed. Again application was made to Rome, where the new Pope, Nicholas V., was a native of Genoa and an adherent of the Fregosi, who had again obtained the upper hand in 1447. The Pope confided the government of the island to Ludovico Campo Fregoso, who overcame the resistance of Mariano da Gaggio, and assumed office about 1449.

Things went from bad to worse, until the people, despairing of good government, finally resolved to seek the protection of the Bank of St George.

Early in the fifteenth century this Bank, which seems already to have existed for about fifty years, was granted a considerable extension of its powers. The directors and their assistants were practically above the law, and answerable only to the creditors of the republic, for whom they acted. The national debt of Genoa had grown so difficult to manage that the establishment of this corporation, although dangerous, was yet convenient both to the government and its creditors. From early times the expeditions of the Genoese had often been conducted on what may be called joint-stock principles, and the bank appears to have grown out of an amalgamation of debts and credits on the territories and finances of the republic.

We have seen how the Corsicans took the resolution of putting themselves under the protection of the bank. Perhaps this resolution was not altogether voluntary, as the bank, about 1448, had been granted  
A.D. 1450-64. the administration of Corsica and the Levantine colonies. The Pope's selection of a Fregoso to govern the island no doubt caused some delay. The Senate ceded the island to the bank, and the Fregosi claims were bought out; with the result

## THE BANK OF ST GEORGE

that by 1453 the Bank of St George was officially the recognised authority in Corsica. But in the south many of the signori held out for Aragon, and Genoa was forced to make many concessions to King Alphonso, who, however, was too much occupied elsewhere to give much attention to Corsican affairs.

The opponents of the bank were treated as rebels, and many prisoners put to death. This policy still further embittered the nobility of the south, who joined the Fregosi, making common cause with Tommasino Campo Fregoso. This man invaded Corsica about 1461, defeated the troops of the Bank of St George, acquired possession of a large part of the island, and was proclaimed Count of Corsica.

But the Adorni had been out of power (except <sup>A.D. 1464-78.</sup> for three or four months in 1461) for over fifteen years, whilst some of the Fregosi were jealous of the power of the Archbishop of Genoa, although he was a member of their family. Consequently, in 1461, the Duke of Milan, Francesco Sforza, contrived to gain enough supporters to cause the 'signoria' of the republic to be conferred on himself, and Genoa was without a doge until 1478. During this period the Adorni were in power, but the Duke of Milan controlled the policy of the republic. The bank resigned Corsica to him, he claiming that the island would be governed better by his officers, and also better protected against foreign enemies, than if it remained under the bank's control. (Bank stock had lately fallen heavily, and the directors were perhaps glad to be relieved of so costly a property as Corsica.)



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He sent Antonio Cotta as governor, who convened an assembly at Biguglia, where the deputies swore allegiance to Milan. But a discussion between the retainers of some of the southern lords and the mountaineers of the north led to bloodshed. Cotta himself suppressed the riot and punished the rioters, thereby offending the signori, who held that he had infringed their rights by punishing their followers, an opinion which their equals in any European country would probably have upheld. They said little, but went home and prepared to avenge the affront.

A.D. 1466.

The inhabitants of the Terra del Commune were well aware that an outbreak was imminent, so they held an assembly on their own account to consider what to do.

Sambucuccio di Alando, a descendant of the founder of the Terra, was chosen as leader, with instructions to preserve peace if possible. Backed by the whole strength of the Terra del Commune he was able to overawe the noble families, not too sure of their own union for long.

Peace was preserved; and a second assembly decided to send Sambucuccio, with some other delegates, to Milan. This delegation obtained Cotta's recall; but his successor was unable to curb the turbulent nobility, and soon the whole country was in a state of war and confusion. Tommasino Fregoso took the opportunity to reclaim his authority as count, but was taken prisoner and sent to Milan.

1478. In the course of time Francesco Sforza and his successor passed away, and Milan, under a regency, was no longer to be feared. The Adorni, in 1478,

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decided that it was time their power should be recognised by the restoration of Prospero Adorno to the ducal chair. Accordingly, they renounced all allegiance to Milan, defeated the regent's army and renewed the independent power of the doges.

After a few months the Fregoso faction again prevailed, and their power in Genoa paved the way for their return to Corsica.

For some reason which can hardly be understood, A.D. 1480-83. the Court of Milan released Tommasino Fregoso and recognised his claim to Corsica. He returned in 1480, and resumed his former title, with more than his former power. His son Giano, by marrying a lady of the Leca family, brought Giampolo da Leca into the Genoese, or, at all events, the Fregoso interest.

But the Leca family were by no means unanimous in their support of Fregoso, for Renuccio da Leca acceded to the popular voice and became the leader of the national party.

The Fregoso government was unpopular, and 1483-87. the nation sought the protection of the Prince of Piombino, who was already in possession of Elba. Prince Appian was willing to add to his dominions, and sent over his brother Gherardo to take possession of Corsica, with a small army and a large retinue, the latter comprising, amongst other items, a number of musicians and jugglers. The poor islanders were astonished at this luxurious invasion, but they took Gherardo to Lago Benedetto and proclaimed him Count of Corsica (1483). The Fregosi retired in alarm, and again sold their rights to the Bank of St George, which had already paid for them in 1453.

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The bank took active measures and defeated Renuccio da Leca, on which Gherardo promptly returned to Piombino. But Tommasino Fregoso, although he had sold his claims, did not intend to finally resign them. His son stayed in the island, whilst he went to Genoa, and both encouraged and assisted the opponents of the bank.

Giampolo and Renuccio da Leca united against the common foe, and Giampolo was elected, or recognised by the party as the Corsican leader. Affairs went so ill for the bank that the directors obtained the appointment of a committee, with supreme power over both the republic and the bank of St George, in 1487. This committee imprisoned Tommasino at Lerici. The doge and his son, enraged at the insult to their family, soon contrived his escape, and he fled to Corsica; whilst a member of the committee was murdered by the servants of Fregosino, the doge's son. (The doge was Paul Fregoso, a cardinal and archbishop of Genoa.)

.D. 1488-1501. This outrage was punished by the defeat of the Fregosi and Leca in Corsica. In 1488 Renuccio da Leca was captured by treachery and sent to Genoa, where he died in prison; whilst Giampolo and the Fregosi were defeated and expelled from the country.

In the same year the Adorni overthrew the Fregosi at Genoa and accepted the mediation of the Milanese. The cardinal-doge retired on a pension, and for the next ten years the republic was subject to the Duke of Milan, and the Adorni in power as his lieutenants. The Bank of St George, relieved from anxiety as to the Fregosi claim, resumed power, and bank stock rose in value. Giampolo, after another attempt at resistance,

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took up his abode in Sardinia and waited. The bank exploited Corsica for ten years and earned the hatred of the people. Then Giampolo came back with a handful of followers. Misgovernment had so worked for him that he was joined by the Corsicans of all ranks, and soon found himself at the head of an army of over seven thousand men, with a small force of cavalry. Amongst his supporters was Renuccio della Rocca, at the head of the powerful clan of Cinarca.

Since 1490 Genoa had had nothing to fear from Aragon, where Ferdinand the Catholic, was too busy forming the kingdom of Spain to trouble himself with Corsica, and had made peace with the republic; but at the end of the fifteenth century France succeeded Milan as the over-lord of Genoa, and Giampolo had thus well timed his invasion. But what force could not effect was done by negotiation. The bank managed to detach Renuccio della Rocca from the national party, and thus drew off a great part of Leca's army. Then Negro, the Genoese commander, defeated him and took his son prisoner. Giampolo, discouraged, made terms. He again retired to Sardinia and took no further part in politics. His son Orlando escaped from Genoa to Rome and tried to persuade him to make another attempt, but Giampolo declined. Orlando was killed in Corsica not long after. Giampolo died at Rome some years later.

Renuccio della Rocca, the chief of the Cinarca, in spite of his desertion of Giampolo da Leca, suspected that the policy of the Bank of St George was likely to injure him. He was a man of great influence and possessed several castles, in which he hoped to be

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able to defy the power of the bank. At one of them, near Baricini, he kept a spring of water under lock and key to prevent its being poisoned, a singular illustration of the manners of the time.

A.D. 1502-11.

In 1502 he openly declared against the bank, but the governor, Nicolo Doria, obliged him to make peace, one of the conditions being that he and his family should thenceforward reside at Genoa. Doria laid waste the districts whose inhabitants had been in favour of the defeated chief, the valley of the Niolo in particular being completely devastated. Renuccio quitted Genoa in 1504, leaving his family there, and went to Sardinia with the view of reconciling himself to Giampolo da Leca, who refused to see him. His wife and children were imprisoned at Genoa when his flight was discovered, but this did not deter him from fresh efforts. He landed in Corsica with a few followers, and again declared against the bank. He held the tower of Sollacaro against four thousand Genoese troops and repulsed their attacks. But Doria was too quick for him and defeated him before he could raise any great force. His eldest son was beheaded and he was put to flight. His adherents, and all who could be accused of being so, were punished by the burning of their villages.

Three years later he returned again, with but a handful of followers. Again there was a Doria at the head of affairs, who suppressed the revolt and compelled Renuccio once more to agree to reside at Genoa; not ungenerous treatment, all things considered. On arrival there, he was taken to the French governor's castle, the city being unsafe on account of the rage of its inhabitants. He now disappears for

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another three years, probably having escaped during the insurrection which took place at Genoa in 1507, when the French were temporarily expelled.

Finally, he returned to Corsica to make a last effort against Genoa. His eldest son had been put to death, another had been killed by accident some years before; his castles and lands had been confiscated, and his state was altogether desperate. He failed to rally the people to the cause of liberty, and was compelled to hide himself. A Genoese officer rode past his hiding-place. The sight so exasperated him that he followed the Genoese, attacked him by night, killed him and took his horse. Then he showed himself in public, and was pursued by the troops of the bank. Unable to collect forces to oppose them, he took to the hills for refuge. The peasants, tortured to disclose his hiding-places, could not protect him. In May 1511 he was found dead, slain by an unknown hand.

So perished Renuccio della Rocca, once the most powerful man in Corsica, ten years after his desertion of Giampolo da Leca. He was the last of the old feudal signori who resisted Genoa. The Cinarca, Istria, Leca and other ancient families of Corsica, lawless and fierce as they were, did for many a long year, take the lead in resistance to Genoese tyranny; but now their power was broken, and with their fall their country, for a time, fell also. During the next forty years the Bank of St George ruled unchecked; indeed, since the expulsion of Giampolo the bank had practically been possessed of absolute power.

The administration of the Bank of St George was, A.D. 1511-53. on paper, liberal. The governor, residing at Bastia with his 'vicario' (who took his place when he was



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absent), was the supreme authority. His lieutenants were dispersed amongst the districts of the island, and from their decisions appeals lay to the governor. From him appeal lay to the Court of *Syndicato*, composed of six members, three representing the nobility and three the people. But they might be either Corsicans or Genoese, so that in their representative capacity they did not count for much. None of the chief officials held office for more than three years. The limitation of the period of office, first proposed by Bouccicaut, had been carried into effect by the Bank, whose directors, naturally, did not wish their subordinates to imitate the *Fregosi*.

The *Terra del Commune*, with all its institutions, Fathers of the Community, *podestà*, and so forth, still existed under the rule of the bank; and the *consultà*, or general meeting, was called together at Biguglia whenever the governor desired the assent of the people to his measures.

The *Dodici* were still elected by the people of Corsica, not appointed by their rulers, and their consent was required to all new laws. Retaining their old name, their number was increased—the twelve being for the ‘*Di Qua*,’ or northern portion of the island, and six more for the country beyond the mountains, *i.e.*, the south, which never had been part of the *Terra del Commune*. But this apparently liberal constitution was merely nominal, and the people found themselves subject to a power which only governed them to live upon the fruits of their industry; regarding the island as a convenient place for the support of the ruling classes, entirely Genoese, and for the improvement of their fortunes. We must



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not forget that the principal duty of the government officers was to collect taxes; their employers—the directors of the bank—desiring to make as large profits as possible out of a territory granted mainly to indemnify the creditors of the republic.

Still, until the sixteenth century, their rule was not oppressive to the people in general.

It took time to humble the old nobility and crush their power. While this was being done, the good will of the nation was desirable to prevent any fresh insurrections.

In 1492 Ajaccio was fortified, or strengthened, and the city greatly improved; much being then, and later, rebuilt, and its position somewhat removed from the old site. Many Genoese merchants settled there, and it came to be considered as the most important place after Bastia. The strongholds of Genoa were always on the coast. Holding the principal harbours, they felt safe, in spite of any disorder existing in the interior.

The towers (resembling the Martello towers of our own coast) which dot the shores of Corsica from end to end, are also due either to the bank or to the Republic of Genoa. They were used as watch-towers to guard against the attacks of pirates, and their inmates lit beacon fires on their summits to alarm the inhabitants of the district when the ships of the corsairs were sighted. Then, either by flight, or, if possible, by organised resistance, the barbarous enemy could be evaded or repulsed. But from the fact that the fertile plain on the east coast was more and more abandoned as time went on, and that only in the nineteenth century has it begun to be repopled, we

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may doubt the efficiency of this protection. On the coast only the fortified towns were safe, and even they not always.

A.D. 1528. The terrors of the plague augmented the sufferings of the Corsicans; and the nation, crushed and despairing, bore the yoke of the bank for many years, and that yoke became gradually heavier. But at last Genoa incurred the enmity of France, in whose army many Corsicans were serving, amongst whom was Sampiero da Bastelica, ere long to prove the most terrible foe to Genoa that Corsica had yet produced.

During this period of oppression and suffering many Corsicans had left their homes to seek careers abroad, but their hearts turned ever to their own country, and when at length the hour of vengeance came they devoted themselves, without hesitation, to the overthrow of the power of the Bank of St George.

## CHAPTER VI

### SAMPIERO DA BASTELICA

SAMPIERO was born at Bastelica in 1497. His early A.D. 1497-1553. years were passed at home, and he must have heard of, and sympathised with, the resistance offered by Renuccio della Rocca to the tyranny of Genoa. Sampiero was a notable sportsman in his youth, and when he grew up he, as did many another Corsican in those days, quitted his country and took service with the Medicis.

Various stories are told of his courage and strength.\* At Rome he fought with and killed a wild bull, apparently because a companion and rival had defied him to this strange contest. As a member of the Medicean 'Black Band,' he gained a reputation for courage, determination and presence of mind. When Catherine de Medicis married the Dauphin of France, he obtained the chance of entering the French service, becoming, about 1533, the colonel of a Corsican regiment, which the king had lately raised. He distinguished himself in the French army, particularly at the siege of Perpignan in 1542, where he saved the life of the dauphin, afterwards King Henry II.

\* *Celesia, Cons. Gian. Fieschi*, ch. xv.



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At this siege also, he, with fifty Italians, defeated and put to flight five hundred Spanish knights who had challenged the besiegers. So, at least, says Celesia, adding that the vanquished knights were thrown into such disorder that the victors killed and captured many, without any loss to themselves. A fit exploit for a friend of Bayard.

The peace signed at Crépy, in 1544, gave Sampiero some leisure ; and he came home to Corsica soon after, and married Vannina, the only daughter and sole heiress of Francesco di Ornano, one of the richest noblemen in the island. On his marriage he assumed the name of Ornano, by which his descendants were afterwards known in France.

About this time another famous Corsican name occurs in the history of the European wars. In 1525 Giocante, Casabianca, in command of a body of Corsicans, defended Savona for the King of France, Andrew Doria, at that time in the French interest, aiding him by sea. Genoa was then on the side of the empire and Doria an exile.

In 1528 Andrew Doria, who had left the French service and joined the emperor, contrived to overthrow, not only the French power in Genoa—established with his help in 1527—but also the power of the non-noble class, for nearly two centuries supreme in the republic to the detriment of the nobility. The families of Adorno and Fregoso, for generations leaders in the state, were expelled, their very names being suppressed. Later (1547), the famous conspiracy of Gianluigi Fieschi caused many of his family to be banished from Genoa. Corsica had frequently been the battle ground of

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Genoese exiles, sure there of being able to stir up trouble against the party in power; and Sampiero, whilst serving in Italy and France, had become the friend of both the Fregosi and Fieschi; he was therefore suspected, both by the Senate and by the Genoese authorities in Corsica. Before long he afforded them some pretext for his arrest. The actual reason is doubtful, but some correspondence with either the Fieschi or Fregosi, or with both, seems most probable. His position as a French officer, and the heir (through his wife) to large estates in the island, also made him obnoxious to the government. He was arrested and imprisoned. Francesco di Ornano went to Genoa and applied to the French ambassador, who soon got his son-in-law released. But Sampiero had now a personal incentive to take up his country's cause against Genoa on the first opportunity, and a chance soon came. The more or less constant war between France and the empire broke out again. Genoa held by the emperor, but France had certain claims on the republic, which she was ready to maintain at any convenient time.

So far back as 1396 a treaty had been made between Charles VI. of France and the Senate,\* of which one article provided that Genoa and her dependencies could not be alienated from the French crown for any reason whatever.

After the battle of Pavia the French had, of course, lost all control over Italy; but this was not held (by France) to be any bar to her claims on Genoa. How far the treaty of 1396 was an

\* De Thou, Vol. II., p. 375 (Bk. XII.).

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attack on the rights of the empire—at that time powerless in Italy—is a question which might be interesting, if the fate of countries had ever been decided by law instead of by force.

Granting the French king's right to Genoa, his right to Corsica naturally follows; and he was strongly disposed to assert this right in 1553 because, Genoa having sided with the emperor, he was shut out of Italy by her fleet; but with Corsica in his hands he could easily pour troops into Tuscany by sea.

A.D. 1553. Sampiero was with the French troops, under Marshal Paul de Thermes, at the siege of Siena, when the latter received orders to prepare for the conquest of Corsica. He at once seconded an enterprise so much to his liking by every means in his power.

His friend Altobello de' Gentili went to Corsica to prepare the people for the invasion, and Sampiero was soon able to undertake that his countrymen would rise against the Genoese on the arrival of the French.

France being in alliance with Turkey against the empire, the services of the Turkish fleet were available for the the attack on Corsica.

Dragut, the Ottoman admiral, arrived in the Gulf of Lepanto, in June 1553, with sixty galleys, and was there joined by the Baron de la Garde (Polin) with thirty-six French ships.

After an attack on the island of Elba the combined fleets sailed to Corsica, having first taken on board the forces under Thermes, with whom were Jourdain des Ursins and Giovanni da Torino,

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besides Sampiero and other Corsicans and the exiled Aurelio Fregoso. The Duke de Somma brought some Italian troops, and De Valeron six French companies. The French forces comprised in all about two thousand five hundred men, besides the Turkish fleet and what troops Sampiero could levy in the island, which was reached on 25th August.

Andrew Doria had, before this, gone to Naples with his fleet, sending a detachment to Leghorn. He had warned the Genoese authorities of the French invasion, and instructed them to garrison and provision the maritime cities, especially Calvi and Bonifacio.

Bastia, the first place attacked, fell in a day. Thermes then proceeded to San Fiorenzo, which was not fortified, and was at once occupied by Valeron with the French troops. San Fiorenzo was then placed in a state of defence, and a French and Corsican garrison put into it; the neighbouring village of San Pietro was also strengthened, to give a strong post in the hills near.

Sampiero (who had been joined by his countrymen in great numbers) took Corte, and afterwards Ajaccio, being scarcely resisted at either place. In the latter town there were many Genoese merchants; some of them appear to have suffered in fortune when the town was taken, but, on the whole, the war was at this time carried on with humanity.

Bonifacio, the stronghold of the Genoese, was besieged by Dragut, and here the fighting was serious. The fortress was strong and its defenders



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determined; moreover, the fear of falling into the hands of the Turks led the inhabitants to second the efforts of the garrison to the utmost. The besiegers lost six hundred men without making any impression on the fortress; and Dragut, infuriated at his losses, prepared to use his whole power in the reduction of the place. A French officer, Captain Nas, had been sent with the Turkish forces by Thermes. This man contrived to warn the defenders of their risk, and to arrange a capitulation, by which they surrendered to the King of France, on condition that their lives and property should be spared. But when the garrison marched out one of the Turks observed an arquebuse of unusually fine workmanship in the hands of one of the Genoese soldiers. This he tried to take. The soldier, enraged at such insulting treatment, shot him, and some of the Turk's comrades who ran to help him were also killed. This led to a massacre of the greater part of the garrison. Captain Nas, who felt his honour concerned in the matter, made every effort to stop it, and nearly lost his own life in the tumult. Dragut saved him with difficulty; and then, disgusted at losing the plunder of Bonifacio, sailed to the East with what prisoners he could secure, leaving his French allies to their own devices.\*

Calvi was well fortified, and its citadel almost inaccessible. La Garde, with his fleet, attacked it by sea, and Sampiero, with his Corsicans, by land. The suburbs were soon carried, and the place was blockaded during September and October.

\* De Thou, Vol. II., p. 379.

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But when Calvi was in danger Genoa was active. A reward of five thousand crowns was offered for Sampiero's head, and he and his friends, Peter Ornano and Gentili, were proclaimed rebels. Andrew Doria prepared to invade the island in person, and twenty-six galleys were sent under Agostino Spinola and one of the Palavicini to relieve Calvi.\*

Palavicino arrived first, reinforced the garrison of Calvi and gained time for the arrival of further help from Genoa. Spinola following him with the rest of his fleet, the prudent Thermes raised the siege and took up a strong position in the mountains.

Andrew Doria, now in his eighty-sixth year, did not spare himself in the service of his country. His influence with the emperor was of great service, Charles V. promising to pay half the expense of the expedition. Doria landed near San Fiorenzo in November, and promptly laid siege to that place. He brought with him an army of about eight thousand foot and five hundred horse, more than half being supplied by the Governor of Milan and the Duke of Florence. The French fleet, driven from Calvi by Spinola, was not in a position to attack Doria, but hovered near ready to seize any advantage, while Sampiero held the roads and cut off his supplies. Thus the Genoese, whilst besieging San Fiorenzo, were in a manner besieged themselves, and suffered greatly from sickness and hunger. The city was defended by Jourdain des Ursins, with a garrison partly composed of French troops and partly of Corsicans. Giovanni da Torino, with one hundred and fifty men, brought supplies to the defenders

\* Vincens, Bk. X., ch. ii.

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before the place was fully invested, and they were  
A.D. 1554. thereby enabled to hold out for three months. At  
the end of that time want of food obliged Des  
Ursins to capitulate. Doria offered terms to the  
French, but regarded the Corsicans as rebels and  
excepted them from the capitulation. But they,  
hearing this, broke out, under the leadership of  
Bernardino, forced the Genoese lines and escaped.  
Des Ursins then accepted the terms offered and  
surrendered.

During this siege further reinforcements of Spanish  
and Genoese troops arrived, and Bastia, which was  
held by only fifty Frenchmen, was retaken, but an  
attack on Furiani failed.

Doria, after the fall of San Fiorenzo, was recalled  
for the service of the emperor. Thermes, who had  
not accomplished much during the winter, thereupon  
resumed his activity, and, aided by Sampiero, regained  
much of what had been lost. Spinola, who was now  
in command of the Genoese troops, held most of the  
northern part of the island, and in June the important  
fortress of Corte was treacherously given up to him.  
In August Thermes laid siege to it, and a sortie  
made in October was defeated by Sampiero, who was  
wounded. All this time a war of reprisals was going  
on and the country devastated.

About four thousand Corsicans were serving under  
Sampiero, and when he was wounded his place was  
taken by Jacopo Santo da Mare (or Santafiore), a  
wealthy Corsican nobleman.

It was evident that Corte could not hold out much  
longer, and help was sent from the garrisons of Bastia  
and Calvi. Different accounts are given of these

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operations, but it seems that the two relief detachments, having joined, were finally defeated in the mountains between the River Golo and San Pietro-di-Tenda.

Sampiero, scarcely cured of his wound, had rejoined the army in spite of it; the Corsicans had to deplore the loss of Jacopo Santo, who was killed; but Corte fell, and before long the power of Genoa was confined to a few fortified towns on the coast, all the interior being held by the French and Sampiero.

Paul de Thermes soon afterwards left to take command of the army in Piedmont. Sampiero hoped to succeed him in Corsica, but certain complaints made against him by Thermes caused him to be ordered to Paris, where he soon made his peace at Court. Nevertheless, the Corsican command was given to Jourdain des Ursins, who retained it for some years, and even declared that Corsica was annexed to France and should never be surrendered. The Corsicans were willing enough to belong to any power other than Genoa; but when, a few years later, France made peace with the empire, no more was heard of this declaration.

Meantime the island was distracted by faction; vendetta and plunder raged unchecked. The war had stopped agriculture. Spinola and Sampiero between them had destroyed everything that came in their way, and the people were starving when Genoa, from whatever motive, supplied their wants. Abundance of grain was sent, and safe-conducts granted to all who wished to buy, not excluding those who had been in arms against the republic.

In the year 1555 Spinola's forces were increased, A.D. 1555.

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and the fortifications of San Fiorenzo demolished to save the expense of keeping a garrison there. This place was not one of the ordinary Genoese fortresses, but had served the purpose of the French for a while.

Jourdain des Ursins was not able to accomplish much against Spinola, but he was the centre of French influence and hostility to Genoa. He made an attempt to reduce Calvi, but failed. Soon after the Baron de la Garde arrived with a French fleet, and was joined by a Turkish squadron under Dragut. The siege of Calvi was again undertaken, Des Ursins bringing up his forces to invest the place on the land side. About six thousand men were landed from the two fleets and over twenty guns. On the 10th August the French made three assaults, but were repulsed with the loss of three hundred men. Next day the Turks attacked in their turn, but it is doubtful if Dragut was in earnest; at any rate, they did nothing of consequence, and the siege was raised. Des Ursins then wished to attack Bastia, but Dragut refused his help and sailed back to the Levant in the end of August.\* The French fleet also returned to Marseilles, leaving Des Ursins to his fate. The appearance of a fleet under Doria perhaps hastened the movements of both Dragut and La Garde. The Turkish alliance did not help the French cause in Corsica. The people considered it impious and abominable to employ Turks against Christians, and whole provinces were persuaded to submit to the Bank of St George. Genoa being thus triumphant in the north, Des Ursins retired to Ajaccio.

But the return of Sampiero raised all Corsica in

\* De Thou, Vol. II., pp. 596, 597.

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arms once more, and yet one more attack was made on Calvi; it failed, however, and Sampiero had to ride for his life. The Genoese tried to surprise Bonifacio, but their ships went aground during the night, and many men were lost.

Thus, at the beginning of 1556, Genoa still held A.D. 1556. some of the seaports, but had failed to recover Bonifacio, whilst the French and Sampiero held most of the inland districts.

In this state of affairs the truce of Vauxelles, signed early in this year between Henry II. and Charles V., had but little effect in checking hostilities in Corsica, if it was ever recognised there at all. When it was broken in November the position was unaltered, except for an increase, if possible, in the hatred borne to Genoa by the Corsicans. This was caused by their raising fresh taxes in the island, wherever they could, to fill the now almost exhausted coffers of the Bank of St George.

In the next year Sampiero was recalled to France, 1557. he being still in the French service, and Jourdain des Ursins, deprived of his help, was reduced to great straits. Genoa reinforced her army in Corsica with over three thousand\* men, mostly Germans, thereby gaining so great a superiority that the French commander was obliged to retire to the mountains, leaving garrisons in such towns as he still retained.

The return of Sampiero with supplies, in 1558, 1558. gave promise of some more determined action; but the treaty of peace signed at Câteau-Cambrésis, in

\* *Univ. Hist., Mod.*, Vol. XXV., ch. lxxiii., sec. 5.

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A.D. 1559. 1559, put an end to the war, so far as France was concerned. All the places held by that power in Corsica were handed over to Genoa, the French troops evacuating the island, with their artillery and stores.

Six years of almost continuous warfare had greatly impoverished both the island and the Bank of St George. The most complete disorder prevailed everywhere, whilst the hatred of the Corsicans was now fully reciprocated by the Genoese, who had suffered severely.

Even the tranquillity of Genoa itself, never too well assured, had been troubled by jealousies connected with the Corsican administration. In 1556 one of the Giustiniani, having been recalled from a command he held in the island before the usual term, attributed his disgrace to Nicola Palavicino. With the help of one of his brothers, and an officer who had served under him, he stabbed his supposed enemy in a church, after which the trio escaped. Such incidents tend to show the desperate character of the men usually sent at that period to represent the Genoese authority in Corsica.

Sampiero did not leave the country with the French army, but ere long he found that Corsica was now no place for him. The determined enemy of Genoa could hope for no pardon, and the exhausted nation needed rest before making another struggle for liberty. His hope to engage the Queen of France in his cause was disappointed by the death of the king. Catherine was in no hurry to engage in any foreign enterprise, having too much already on her hands at home. Hostile to Genoa as she



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was, and friendly to Sampiero, she had to face both open and secret foes to herself and her children, and the fate of Corsica had, for the time, ceased to interest France.

The Bank of St George had been unable to bear the cost of the Corsican war, and in 1556 had surrendered the island to the government of the republic. This, however, made no great difference in the mode of government; the island was still treated as an estate from which its owners had a right to draw as much revenue as possible. A full inquiry into the value and extent of every man's estate was instituted, with a view of raising fresh taxes. This caused great discontent, and a general rising seemed imminent. Sampiero was looked to as leader, but this time Genoa was too strong for him. He realised that for the present he could do nothing, and left the country. Going to Marseilles, he left his family there, and went on himself to Paris. His estates, or, more properly, those of his wife, were promptly confiscated by the Genoese government.

Genoese commissaries and officers of all sorts were now let loose to prey on Corsica. At peace with France, and free from danger from the Turk, with whom peace had been made in 1558, Genoa was now in a position to take vengeance on all who had opposed her.

In 1560 the plundering began. Commissioners A.D. 1560. from Genoa valued all real property in Corsica, whether cultivated or not, and a tax of three per cent. was imposed on the value as assessed by them. In addition to this a capitation tax was levied, which,

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of course, affected the whole nation. But the land tax itself pressed upon the numerous villages or pieves, which have always owned considerable tracts of country, especially forest land, as well as upon the wealthier classes. Then, as now, there was much untilled land in Corsica, and the people had to pay, not merely on its value, but on its value as arbitrarily assessed.

The tax was collected in the most oppressive manner; those who resisted were put to death, prisoners are said to have been poisoned, and many of the principal men were imprisoned.

While Corsica was thus oppressed Sampiero was not idle. He sought by every means to deliver his country from Genoa, even preferring a change of masters to leaving things as they were. His best chance seemed a treaty between Philip II. of Spain and the King of Navarre, by which the latter agreed to surrender Navarre in exchange for Corsica and Sardinia.

Sampiero willingly consented to this arrangement, and went to Constantinople to try and get the Sultan's help, or at least to secure his neutrality. But the death of the King of Navarre put a stop to this plan, and Sampiero set forth to return to Marseilles.

A.D. 1562. On his homeward journey he heard, to his dismay, that his wife Vannina had decided to put herself into the power of Genoa. Now, besides his indomitable enmity to the republic, which caused him to regard such a step with horror; Sampiero also saw that it might render him liable to suspicion amongst his friends. He was powerful enough to make it worth while to

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buy his submission, and the abduction of his wife and children would be a good excuse for his own surrender under a pretence of fear for their safety.

Vannina had been living at Marseilles with her younger son, the elder, Alfonso, being at the French Court. A priest, named Ombrone, who was in Sampiero's confidence, together with one Agostino Bazzicalupo, used every possible argument to persuade her to go to Genoa. The restoration of her fief of Ornano was promised, and even the return of her husband to his native country, with pardon for his past offences. Finally she was persuaded, and removed her possessions from her house to a Genoese ship, in which she sailed with Ombrone and her younger son. But her flight was known; she was pursued by Sampiero's friend Antonio di San Fiorenzo, with some Corsicans and caught at Antibes. She was then placed under the protection of the authorities at Aix, but, on her husband's arrival, she returned with him to Marseilles.

The sight of his dismantled house enraged him beyond measure, and he determined on her death. He intended to have her killed by his black slaves; but she, hearing this, entreated him to do it himself, in order that no hand but his should touch her. He consented; and, after humbly asking her pardon, strangled her with his own hands; and then caused her remains to be buried in the church of the Franciscans. This done, he went with speed to the French Court, to justify his crime in person. He was received with an outburst of horror and indignation, especially from the ladies, apprehensive of other husbands following so pernicious an example. Queen Catherine refused even to see

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him. But he, baring his breast and showing the scars received in the service of France, asked, 'What mattered it to the king whether he did well or ill, or how he arranged matters with his wife?' After all, in such a Court, Sampiero's military talents and fidelity far outweighed the murder of his wife. Whatever was thought at the time, it is certain that he was not punished in France. But later, in Corsica, he was to suffer for this deed of cruelty and violence, which casts a deep shadow over the memory of one of Corsica's greatest patriots.

Sampiero now spent some time in vain attempts to get help for his country. But he found it impossible to obtain open assistance, although, in secret, both money and arms were forthcoming from France and Tuscany. Finally, he determined to attempt a rising without any outside assistance, hoping by success to enlist sympathy. He used what money and arms he had in fitting out a small expedition, and landed in the gulf of Valinco in June 1564. The strength of this expedition is variously described. It seems certain that it was conveyed in two ships from Marseilles, and that the ships brought little or no stores; so the highest figure given, one hundred and fifty Corsicans, besides the personal friends of the leader, seems most probable. Amongst his friends were Antonio di San Fiorenzo, Campocasso and Peter Ornano, besides some Frenchmen. Campocasso belonged to one of the families in which the title of caporale had become hereditary, and had been active in resistance to the arbitrary taxation lately imposed by the Genoese. Some of his relations having been captured and threatened with death, he had submitted to exile to save their lives.

A.D. 1564.

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Having secured Olmeto, Sampiero sent his ships to France for military stores, and marched north towards Corte. The people welcomed him, and his army grew as he marched onward. Fornari, the Genoese governor, shut himself up in Bastia and wrote to Genoa for help, which was promptly sent, under command of Niccolo di Negro, who marched at once to Corte, where he waited for Sampiero. But when the latter arrived, it was evident that the Genoese forces could not cope with him, and they retired. The Corsican army advanced, and encountered that of Genoa near Vescovato. For some time the fight went on without much advantage to either side, when a party of Corsicans in the Genoese service faltered in their efforts at the sight of Sampiero. The Corsican leader, who had kept a reserve of picked men under his own command, took such advantage of their hesitation that the Genoese army was soon in flight towards Bastia, and the district of Vescovato was secured to the Corsicans. At Caccia another battle took place, where the Genoese troops, caught in a defile, were defeated with a loss of over three hundred killed (amongst whom was Niccolo di Negro), besides many prisoners. But Sampiero had to do more than win battles. All over the island the people were desirous of joining him, and he had to leave his friend Antonio in command of the army and go himself to Vico, where he was met by many of the magnates of the island. They declared in his favour, and he was soon afterwards proclaimed chief of the nation. He does not appear to have assumed any particular title on this occasion, but his authority was very generally recognised throughout the whole country.

Porto Vecchio fell into the hands of the patriots

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about this time, and the power of Genoa sank very low. But now Stephen Doria, one of their best men, was chosen for the Corsican command. He had acquired his reputation under the empire and under Philip of Spain, and had more talent for war than most of the Genoese nobles of the day. But his ferocity was at least equal to his capacity, and he did not scruple to avow his intention of destroying the crops and buildings throughout the country, and his desire to exterminate the inhabitants, and replace them by colonists more submissive to the parental authority of the republic.

Soon after his arrival he took Vescovato and fortified it ; he also brought thither a convoy of provisions from the fleet, defeating the Corsicans, who tried to cut it off.

Doria's forces were increased by German and Spanish auxiliaries, and Sampiero was forced to retreat. Doria pursued him, but presently found his troops attacked by dysentery. His force was not so large that he could afford to risk loss by sickness, and he retired to Bastia, his route marked by burning villages and ruined crops. Then Sampiero retook Vescovato and still kept his hold on the greater part of the island. A raid was made by some of the Genoese forces right across the mountains to Bastelica, where they destroyed the house in which the Corsican leader had been born ; so rapidly was this carried out that they regained Bastia without being pursued.

The distance from Bastia to Bastelica is over fifty miles direct, the country is very difficult, and Vescovato was held by the Corsicans, so it is evident that Doria was both active and bold.

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Some battalions of Spaniards arrived towards the end of 1564 to reinforce Doria's army, and Porto Vecchio was retaken. Provisions being scanty, the artillery and infantry were embarked to proceed to Calvi, the cavalry going by land to the same place ; an arduous task in a hostile and mountainous country, which, however, they accomplished. But a storm destroyed some of the transports and damaged others, the whole of the artillery being lost. This delayed Doria's operations, and his troops went into winter quarters in Cap-Corse.

The patriot cause at this period suffered by the defection of Campocasso, who retired to his estates, and afterwards remained neutral.

The following year, 1565, was taken up in marches A.D. 1565. and counter-marches, skirmishes and raids, without much result, except the devastation of the country. The Genoese troops cut down the green corn and burnt the villages.

An assembly held at Bozio confirmed Sampiero's authority ; and he did what was possible to form a regular government, on the lines of that established by Sambucuccio di Alando.

In a battle near Corte, Sampiero was defeated, and barely escaped with his life ; an indecisive engagement took place near Omessa, and Corte was taken by the Genoese.

Doria returned to Genoa at the end of the year, having, during his Corsican command, done all he could to reconquer the country, and succeeded in laying waste a great part of it. Sampiero sent, or went, to France about this time and obtained some money, but no men. His son Alfonso joined him,



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bringing some standards, which were worse than useless, as their distribution caused jealousy in the patriot army. Letters were sent to the French Court and to the Duke of Parma, protesting against the apathy of Europe, which allowed the Genoese tyranny to continue.

A.D. 1566. Vivaldi succeeded Stephen Doria, hoping to triumph by fraud where his predecessor had failed by the use of force. His first experiment was tried on Antonio di San Fiorenzo, against whom he employed an assassin, who hoped to shoot him and escape. He failed. Then an attempt was made to poison Antonio, which so far succeeded as to make him ill. So Vivaldi was recalled; Francesco de' Fornari and Rafaele Guistiniano being sent in his place.

The new governors took advantage of the enmity borne to Sampiero by some members of the Ornano family. Three of Vannina's cousins, Gian Antonio, Francesco and Michelangelo, were disposed to avenge her death. Moreover, by killing Sampiero, they would ingratiate themselves with the Genoese government, earn a reward, and possibly get possession of the Ornano estates, besides taking vengeance on their enemy. The name of Peter Ornano, who accompanied Sampiero when he landed in 1564, does not appear in this conspiracy. A priest named Ambrogio, who appears to have had some reason for hating Sampiero, was in his confidence as well as in the plot; and his servant Vittolo, whom he greatly trusted, was bribed to betray him.

1567. Sampiero was at Vico, when Ambrogio brought him false news of a rising in the Rocca district. It was not his habit to delay on such occasions, nor did

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he do so now. He sent Vittolo forward with twenty horsemen to the Cauro (or Cavro) valley, through which his road lay; he himself followed, with his son Alfonso and a few friends. Vittolo sent word to the conspirators, to let them know that their chance had come; and they laid an ambush in a defile through which their victim had to pass, having a company of Genoese musketeers, under the command of Giustiniano, ready to assist them, if necessary. Sampiero and his companions were riding quietly through the defile, fearing nothing, and trusting to the precautions taken by Vittolo, who had rejoined them, when they were suddenly beset and almost surrounded.

Sampiero ordered his son to escape, which the latter reluctantly did. Then he faced his enemies, who, although with numbers on their side, feared to attack him. Gian Antonio he wounded, but in the struggle he was shot from behind, it is said by the traitor Vittolo. The two other Ornani then stabbed him to death, cut his head off, and carried it to Fornari. The Ornani and Giustiniano shared the reward.

Although Sampiero was dead the Corsicans were not yet subdued. Alfonso, in spite of his youth (he was not yet twenty-one years of age), was called to the command of the patriots. He defeated Giustiniano and drove him into Ajaccio, and then held an assembly at Orezza, where his authority was confirmed. But the spirit of faction, held in check to some extent by his father, was soon rampant throughout the land, and Alfonso could not control it. The nation was tired of warfare and wanted peace;

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the Senate of Genoa was willing to grant terms. Finally, George Doria was sent to try and pacify the Corsicans. The new governor was both humane and capable. He found the nation exhausted with war, and torn to pieces by faction, and he soon gained the confidence of some of the more powerful and wealthy families.

A.D. 1569. To Alfonso he offered peace, and liberty to retire to France unmolested. Before long the young man was persuaded to agree to terms for himself and his adherents. The Bishop of Sagona arranged the treaty, and in 1569 Alfonso left Corsica, having stipulated for liberty to all who desired it to do the same; besides obtaining a general pardon for the nation, and the abolition of the recent oppressive taxes. Many followed his example, some going with him to France, some to Venice, and some to Rome, to form a Corsican guard for the Popes. The rights of the Terra del Commune were guaranteed, the power of the nobility kept in check, and for a time Corsica was well governed; but freedom was lost, and the nation too utterly crushed to attempt to regain it.

Sampiero was nearly seventy years old when he was killed, but still vigorous and active, in spite of the hardships he had endured in his adventurous career. He is described as a tall, dark man, of stern aspect and reserved in manner. Simple in his habits and pure in his life, he commanded the respect of friend and foe alike. The tragic fate of his wife threw a gloom over his last years, and doubtless impeded his efforts at gaining freedom for his country. With Sampiero as King of Corsica, instead of a rebel chief, the fate of the nation might have been very

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different. As it was, he lived and suffered almost in vain.

A happier fate was in store for his son. Well received in France, he became a distinguished soldier, and, as Marshal Ornano, earned a place in history and the friendship of Henry IV.

## CHAPTER VII

### SUBJECTION

1570-1729. GEORGE DORIA having pacified Corsica, the nation enjoyed some measure of tranquillity under his government. But he had to contend against plague and famine, as well as against constant attacks of pirates, who ravaged the coasts, and carried off men and women into slavery.

After his return to Genoa the administration grew more and more corrupt. The government of the republic became, in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, regular and consistent, free from the constant revolutions of earlier days, and therefore less liable to attack. Genoa now oppressed Corsica methodically, treating the subject nation with contempt, and deliberately preventing the islanders from improving their condition. Even the Genoese families living in the island, and owning land there, were regarded in Genoa as having degraded themselves by so doing.

The higher ecclesiastical offices were in the hands of foreigners, who took small interest in their flocks. The people, very devout in spite of their violent passions, trusted only in the poor priests whom

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they knew, and who were their fellow-countrymen, the bishops had little or no influence.

The magistrates and officers sent by the republic were followed by a horde of adventurers, who seized upon every lucrative office, adding to their salaries by every extortion in their power. Appeal to Genoa was almost useless, for the prison doors opened to receive all who brought complaints against the government. Inflexible and cruel, the republic referred complainants to the Inquisitors of State, and judged their cases, not from evidence, nor in open court, but '*ex informata conscientiâ.*' (See Vincens, *Hist. de la Répub. de Gènes*, Bk. XII., ch. iv. This picture of Genoese oppression is taken from a writer of Genoese, not Corsican, history. See also Sismondi, *Hist. des Français*, ch. xlviiii.)

The governor was generally some ruined senator, who redeemed his fortunes during his term of office. Complaints against him were not listened to in an assembly where 'every senator who was to give his vote did not know but by extravagance he himself might one day be obliged to have recourse to the same expedient.'\*

Besides his salary and provision for his table, the governor received twenty-five per cent. on the proceeds of confiscations and fines. His lieutenants and officers were scattered about the island, from which they drew not merely present subsistence but provision for the future. In fact, the country was devoured by those who should have developed it. Commerce was destroyed, or, at least, much hindered, for nothing could be exported except to Genoa.

\* Boswell, *Account of Corsica*, ch. ii.

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A considerable revenue was drawn from the sale of licences to carry firearms, which, according to Filippini,\* were practically unknown until the French invasion under Paul de Thermes.

The old practice of 'vendetta' revived, and spread with fearful rapidity. This custom has been the cause of greater misery than even the Genoese rule in Corsica. A vendetta is simply a feud carried on from one generation to another, perhaps long after the original cause of offence has been forgotten. Some quite trivial quarrel may start it. A dispute leading to high words, thence to blows, amongst men who always carry arms, often ends in the death of one of the disputants. Should no legal punishment overtake the criminal, the national code of honour requires one of the victim's family to kill, either the slayer, or, failing him, one of his relations. This done, the duty of killing is transferred to the family of the second victim. Naturally this system becomes complicated, and the two families are soon in a state of private war. Of late years firm government and impartial justice have done much to mitigate this evil, but in the time now under consideration there can be no doubt that justice was by no means impartial, and a rich man, or one with influential friends, could kill his enemy with the certainty of being acquitted, or even evading trial altogether.

Thus the old custom—checked under more than one of the patriot leaders, whose first care was always to administer justice fairly—soon revived, and flourished exceedingly. The practice of carrying

\* A famous Corsican historian. He collected and edited the works of earlier writers, and brought the narrative down to 1594.



## SUBJECTION

firearms became universal, so that the results of the vendetta were greatly increased. Various figures can be adduced to show the terrible waste of life thus caused, but it appears certain that the number of violent deaths amounted to hundreds every year.\*

A vendetta once declared, both sides must be on guard. So that a man be killed, the manner of his killing matters not at all. He may be shot from behind a wall or out of a window, without any dishonour attaching to the slayer.

A man's connections might easily bring him into a vendetta with which he personally had nothing to do, and thus the 'vendetta transversale' became frequent. Families found themselves involved in war by the marriage of a relation, and the obligation was never evaded, nobody ever even thought of such a thing.

Even when none but children were left, as they grew up they learned where to seek for enemies; and the fatal word 'rimbecco' (a term implying neglect to take vengeance) would inflame once more a quarrel that had been all but forgotten.

It is no wonder that such an institution prevented any strong political combination amongst the Corsicans; when so many families had their own private wars to attend to, there was little inclination to combine.

One career was open to a Corsican—that of a soldier. The Genoese had good reason to know their courage and endurance, qualities which they turned to account by enlisting as many as possible for service on

\* 1700 in two years (Boswell); 28,715 in thirty-two years (Valery); 28,000 in thirty years (Gregorovius); 900 per annum (Sismondi). The population of the island was distinctly under 200,000.

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the Continent. The more restless spirits were thus diverted from rebellion, and their help and obedience secured to the republic.

When French policy embroiled Genoa with Savoy, in 1624-25, six hundred Corsicans served in the Genoese army. Again, in the war which began in 1666, the Corsican troops did good service. At Castel Vecchio, in August 1672, they almost destroyed the Piedmontese army; and at one time Restori (the Corsican leader) had near six thousand of them under his command.\*

In October 1676 about a thousand Greeks from the Morea, in despair at the oppression they suffered under Turkish rule, left their homes and settled in Corsica. They had previously agreed with the republic that they should receive land at Paomia, near Vico, as a fief, on condition that they should be ready to serve their new rulers by land or sea when required. The colony was provided with grain and cattle, and assisted in many ways by the Genoese, who hoped to gain a friendly community in a country where they well knew that most of the inhabitants were their enemies. For a time the colony flourished, but the Corsicans both despised and hated the newcomers, and often attacked them; and when the nation revolted against Genoa, in 1729, they were obliged to retire to Ajaccio.†

In 1724 the island was honoured with a second governor, whose seat was at Ajaccio, in addition to the one so long known at Bastia. About ten years before the 'dodici' had represented to the govern-

\* See *Univ. Hist., Mod.*, Vol. XXV., ch. lxxiii., sec. 7.

† See Boswell, *Account of Corsica*, ch. ii.

## SUBJECTION

ment the terrible frequency of crimes of violence, and had obtained an edict suppressing the licences to carry arms. To make up for the loss of revenue entailed by this measure a new tax was levied, called the 'due seini' (twelve scudi on each hearth). But the sale of licences to carry arms went on. This led to great discontent, which was not alleviated by the arrival of a new crowd of harpies at Ajaccio.

While the people were thus harried and annoyed, news came of the execution of several Corsican soldiers in Liguria, for killing some peasants who had jeered at one of them who was undergoing a military punishment.

The Corsicans regarded this execution as an insult to the nation, and were eager for vengeance; and thus irritated, oppressed, and almost united by their anger, they were, in the year 1729, in such a state of unrest that very little was needed to cause a rebellion.

Both civilisation and trade owe much to the Italian republics, and Genoa was one of the greatest of them all. Badly as she treated Corsica, we cannot but admire her wondrous energy and endurance. But misgovernment brings about its own retribution, and the downfall of Genoa may reasonably be attributed to Corsica.

## CHAPTER VIII

### REVOLT

A.D. 1729. THE tax called 'due seini' was the apparent cause of the revolt of the Corsicans in 1729. It began in the district of Corte, where the people, exasperated by the harshness with which the tax was collected, drove the taxgatherers away from the pieve of Bozio. Some soldiers were sent by Pinelli, the governor, to restore order; and they arrived safely at Poggio di Tavagna, where they slept. There, during the night, they were disarmed and sent back to Bastia by Pompiliani, one of the principal inhabitants of the place, who was forthwith recognised as the chief of the insurgents. The movement spread with such rapidity as to make it appear that there had been, if not a plot, at least great readiness for action amongst the people.\*

The fortress of Aleria was seized, and the insurgents supplied themselves with weapons from its armory. Then they marched on Bastia, their numbers rapidly

\* See Benson (*State of Corsica*, sec. 2); Gregorovius (Bk. II., ch. ii.); and Boswell (*Account of Corsica*, ch. ii.), for details, which vary somewhat.

## REVOLT

increasing, and Pinelli found himself besieged by five thousand men; not indeed trained soldiers, but men used to arms and infuriated by oppression. The position was sufficiently serious.

Genoa, trusting to the dissensions amongst her subjects, had no very great force in the island, and Pinelli could not face his assailants; so he took refuge in the citadel and sent the Bishop of Mariana to negotiate.

The Corsicans simply demanded the abolition of all taxes. The bishop proposed an appeal to the Senate, and a truce of twenty-four days was arranged to give time for messengers to go to Genoa and return.

During the truce the people returned to their villages, whilst Pinelli concentrated his forces and sought to set the Corsicans at each others' throats instead of at his own. But they were not to be deceived, and again besieged Bastia with double their former force; and then, having confined the Genoese to the seaports, they held an assembly at Furiani. Pompiliani now resigned the leadership to Ceccaldi\* and Giafferi, who were elected generals; Domenico Raffaelli, an ecclesiastic, being associated with them as minister of justice.

The Bishop of Mariana again negotiated, and a truce of four months was the result of his diplomacy. A new Genoese Governor, Doria, tried to gain adherents amongst the patriots, but they were too determined in their enmity to listen to him. Ceccaldi escaped an attempt to assassinate him; and he and Giafferi made a journey through the country, compos-

\* Or Giacaldi.

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ing quarrels and getting the people to forswear vendetta, for the time being at all events. Then they called together another assembly at Corte, and set up a regular government, appointing magistrates, raising money and organising a national militia.

The latter was composed of all Corsicans capable of bearing arms, whose names were entered in muster-rolls by districts. They were commanded by officers chosen from the chief men of the districts to which they belonged. They received no pay, and provided their own arms, ammunition and food. Thus troops were easily and quickly raised, but an army so assembled is liable to very speedy dispersal. A sudden blow can be struck, but no long campaign can be made for want of supplies.

At the same time it is difficult for an enemy to crush a warlike population, whose quickly raised troops can as quickly disperse and return to their ordinary occupations, thus rendering it impossible to destroy an army which has apparently ceased to exist. The mere possession of arms cannot be used as a proof against an individual in a country where all men carry them as a matter of course, whilst any attempt to disarm the people can but precipitate a fresh outbreak.

The Corsican clergy assembled at Orezza, and unanimously decided that no allegiance was due to Genoa, unless the republic granted the people their rights, and the assembly at Corte swore never more to submit to Genoese rule.

Canon Orticone was sent as Corsican agent to the Continent, with a roving commission to get assistance

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wherever he could; and Giafferi went to Tuscany to buy arms and ammunition, the weapons already in the hands of the patriots being scarcely suitable for warfare.

The truce expired without any treaty being arranged. The Genoese government demanded unconditional submission, and the surrender of Ceccaldi and Giafferi; but the two generals were not mad enough to think of putting themselves in the power of the republic.

The war went on; many towns were soon taken by the patriots, and in addition to Bastia, Calvi and Ajaccio were both besieged, and seemed likely to fall.

The Pope, being sounded as to his inclination to take possession of the island, only offered diplomatic assistance. But this did not satisfy the Corsicans, who refused to discuss terms, except under the auspices of France, Spain or Germany. At Genoa the two first-named powers were suspected of favouring the Corsicans; the republic therefore asked if the French government would object to the intervention of the emperor, which included the landing of German troops in the island.

France merely pointed out that Genoa would probably have to pay a high price for the emperor's assistance.

Charles VI. assisted Genoa with troops, but the price was decidedly high—thirty thousand florins a month for a corps of eight thousand men, and a further payment of one hundred florins for each man killed or missing. The Senate, to save money, at first only used half the number of men offered by the emperor. A.D. 1731.



## THE HISTORY OF CORSICA

They landed in Corsica, under General von Wachtendonk, in August 1731, and very speedily relieved Bastia. This was a sore blow to the patriots, who had hoped to gain possession of this port.

A circular was issued, calling on all Corsicans abroad to return and fight for liberty. This appeal met with a prompt response. The exiles landed at every harbour, and those unable to bear arms sent them, or sent money to buy them. From Marseilles, Tuscany, Rome, Naples, wherever the appeal found them, they rushed to the defence of their country. It is related of Leoni, a captain in the Neapolitan service, that he landed near San Fiorenzo, and there met his father, who was about to assault the tower of Nonza. The old man handed over his command to his son, who took the place, but was killed in doing so. A messenger came to the father with news of his son's death, but found him rather elated at the taking of Nonza than downcast at the loss of his son. Such was the temper of the Corsicans during this war.

Camillo Doria, the Genoese governor, relieved from anxiety as to the fate of Bastia, ravaged the country and destroyed the villages.

Wachtendonk endeavoured to reduce the district of Balagna, but failed; and being surrounded in a bad position among the mountains near San Pellegrino, he was glad to make terms with Giafferi, who permitted him to retreat to Bastia, on condition that he should try to propitiate the emperor in favour of the patriots.

For this purpose an armistice for two months was arranged. A statement of the Corsican grievances

## REVOLT

was sent to Vienna, but no answer was returned within the time agreed on, and the war broke out afresh.

The rest of the eight thousand Germans now A.D. 1732. appeared on the scene, but could not subdue the patriots. At Calenzana, near Calvi, with Doria in command, they were defeated with great loss on the 2d February 1732. Not less than five hundred men fell and were buried on the field of battle, which has since been known as the 'Campo Santo de' Tedeschi.' The clergy of Calenzana instituted the pious custom of annually sprinkling holy water on the spot, in charitable memory of the foreigners who fell there.

It is said that in this engagement the inhabitants of the village cast their bee-hives amongst their assailants, and thereby threw them into confusion.\*

After Calenzana the Genoese applied to the emperor for more men; and a fresh contingent of another four thousand men arrived under Prince Louis of Würtemberg, with four other generals, including Wachtendonk, to help him.

He offered a general amnesty, on condition that the people should lay down their arms and submit to Genoa, which they promptly declined to do. He then made a demonstration in several columns (his generals had to be utilised) and advanced slowly. As he advanced the Corsicans retired to the mountains, whence they harassed the German columns. This campaign was soon stopped by the arrival of the emperor's reply to the Corsican

\* See Valery, Liv. I., ch. xxxviii.

## THE HISTORY OF CORSICA

statement of grievances, together with orders to the prince to act with great leniency.

Some of the Corsican leaders surrendered to the German commander, who handed them over to Genoa, under a guarantee of safety. At Savona they acted as plenipotentiaries to agree to a treaty between the republic and the Corsicans. These leaders were Giafferi, Ceccaldi, Raffaelli and Aitelli; and their lives were in no small danger while they were in the power of the Genoese, even under Würtemberg's guarantee.\*

The treaty was signed in May 1732, but was announced at Genoa and at Corte in terms which varied considerably. The Corsicans understood that the emperor guaranteed them a general amnesty, and the remission of all unpaid taxes, besides admission to all offices of state and sundry other advantages. But the clauses in favour of Corsica were separated from the rest of the treaty, and lacked the imperial guarantee, which was only attached to those which obliged the Corsicans to submit. Moreover, it was, in fact, no treaty at all; but only a decree published by Genoa at the instance of the emperor. Such as it was, however, it answered its purpose for a time. Most of the foreign troops were withdrawn, Wachtendonk staying with a small force to see the new regulations carried into effect. But about three thousand Germans had found graves in Corsica, probably without any notion why they ever came there at all.

\* Sismondi (*Hist. des Français*, ch. xlvi.) puts their captivity after the peace, not before it; but I venture to think that it was as here stated.

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Genoa paid high for imperial aid, as had been predicted by France. Besides other expenses, 'il se trouvait un mécompte de cinq millions de livres resté inexplicable.'\* Ceccaldi went to Spain, Raffaelli to Rome, Aitelli and Giafferi to Leghorn. Wach-tendonk and his troops left in June 1733. Corsica was pacified.

\* Vincens, Liv. XII., ch. iv.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE KINGDOM OF CORSICA

THE departure of the German troops left the Genoese officials free to govern or misgovern Corsica as they liked; but they were now deprived of their only safeguard against the vengeance of their so-called subjects, who had learnt to respect the Germans, but regarded their former oppressors with contempt.

A.D. 1734. In the year 1734, Giacinto Paoli of Morosaglia (as soon as a reasonable pretext had been given by a few arrests and attempted assassinations on the part of the Genoese officials), gathered together at Rostino a sufficient number of patriots to constitute an assembly. Paoli and Castineta were elected generals provisionally, and were soon joined by Giafferi, who lost no time in returning from abroad. Corte was quickly taken, and an assembly held there. War was then formally declared against Genoa, and the island put under the protection of the King of Spain. Canon Orticone proceeded to Spain with this intelligence, and the Corsicans fought under the Spanish flag, until Orticone returned with the news that

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Spain declined the honour of protecting Corsica, but would not assist Genoa.

Then the patriots, following the example set by some of the earlier Italian republics, declared the Virgin Mary sovereign protectress of Corsica, and her picture replaced the Spanish standard. This patroness, at all events, did not refuse their homage, and the enthusiasm caused by an appeal to the religious feelings of the nation was of more value than the interested or hesitating aid of a foreign power.

Giafferi being again appointed general, in the course of a few months he reduced the extent of the Genoese territory to that contained within the walls of their fortresses, in spite of the efforts of troops raised in Switzerland, assisted by some not very trustworthy companies recruited from the dregs of the Genoese populace.

In the following year another assembly was held A.D. 1735. at Corte, and the supreme government confided to Giafferi, Paoli and Ceccaldi as generals. The independence of Corsica was proclaimed and a new constitution inaugurated, under which two parliamentary committees, one of six members and one of four, formed a permanent check on the power of the generals. The committee of six was to be renewed every three months, and accompanied the generals in their journeys and campaigns; that of four was a board of finance and justice. Parliament (as the assembly may now be called) became the sole legislative authority, and it was decided to codify the laws.

The emperor was by this time too much occupied

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with the war of the Polish succession to assist the Republic of Genoa, and after Wachtendonk's departure, in 1733, no German troops were available for the oppression of the patriots. Pinelli, the governor in whose time the first outbreak of the revolt had occurred, was sent over with troops, and well supported by sea. The island was blockaded by Genoese cruisers, and commerce at a standstill. Although even the church bells were melted, ammunition was failing. Food became scarce, and the nation was literally being starved out. In despair, the leaders made proposals for peace, which were not entertained.

At this juncture two ships (equipped by private individuals in England, out of sympathy with the Corsicans) suddenly and unexpectedly dropped anchor at Isola Rossa. A large cargo of provisions and warlike stores was promptly landed and handed over to the Corsican government, the only payment accepted being some Corsican wine for the crews to drink to the health of the patriots. This seasonable aid, useful in itself to equip the almost destitute army, was still more useful in its moral effect. Genoa feared more help would be given from abroad.

The republic offered peace, but found, in her turn, that such offers may be useless. The patriots, armed and equipped anew, stormed Aleria (capturing four guns) and invested both Calvi and Bonifacio.

But two shiploads of warlike stores cannot maintain an army. The people were soon in need again, but held out, hoping against hope for another consignment of stores from unknown friends—hoping



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still more for substantial aid from some foreign prince. This help the people now believed would be given, and strange reports were allowed currency in the island.

In 1732, when Giafferi and his companions were in semi-captivity, pending the conclusion of the treaty which led to the withdrawal of the German troops, a certain Westphalian baron, Theodore von Neuhoff, found himself in Genoese territory and possessed of some influence. In his youth this man had been a page of the Duchess of Orleans; he had been in the Spanish service as well as in that of France; and, finally, he became a wandering adventurer, whose domestic affairs were romantic rather than respectable. He made the acquaintance of the Corsican envoys, and contrived to be of use to them in their troubles, while his undeniable capacity for a kind of statecraft impressed them. In his wanderings he had been thrown in company with such men as Law, who convulsed France with his financing, and with statesmen and soldiers of many lands. The situation of Corsica gave him the idea of making himself a king, and he did it.

He took pains to inform himself fully on Corsican politics, and spent all he had and all he could borrow in the purchase of arms and stores for the patriots. He convinced Orticone that his intimate connection with European courts would enable him to expel the Genoese from Corsica for ever. His reward was to be a crown.

From Leghorn he wrote to the Corsican chiefs, A.D. 1736. offering his assistance if they would guarantee his election as king. Count Rivarola, who was then the

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Corsican envoy in Tuscany, gave him the assurance he required, and he determined to make the attempt. It is hardly credible that the patriot leaders really believed all the Baron von Neuhoff told them ; but he was useful in restoring hope to their followers, while his investment in arms and stores seemed to prove his sincerity.

He landed (12th March 1736) at the mouth of the river Tavignano, where stands all that is left of the ancient city of Aleria. He was attired in a scarlet caftan of silk, Moorish trousers, yellow shoes, and a Spanish hat and feather ; a girdle of yellow silk held a pair of magnificently ornamented pistols ; at his side hung a sabre, and as a sceptre he carried a truncheon. Two French officers, some Italians and Moors, accompanied this strange figure, treating him with deep respect. Truly, as Boswell puts it, 'Theodore was a most singular man.' The rumours which had for some time circulated had recently become more and more circumstantial, and Theodore's arrival was eagerly expected. At the sight of a ship under British colours, which the baron had adopted for the time being, the shore was soon thronged with Corsicans, hoping for another cargo of arms and stores, and perhaps something else. When Theodore landed, his appearance naturally created some excitement ; and the people, with deep interest, saw some of their leaders welcome the stranger, and heard Xavier Matra address him as 'king.'

The cargo he brought was now discharged ; and when he displayed ten pieces of ordnance, four thousand muskets, three thousand pairs of shoes, besides some hundreds of sacks full of grain, and a fair supply of

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both ammunition and money, and explained that this was merely a first instalment, it was felt that a deliverer had indeed come to Corsica in her hour of necessity.\*

He lost no time in explaining that his coronation should take place at once, so that his already intimate relations with the Courts of Europe might be enhanced by the power to treat with their rulers as an equal. To this suggestion the generals agreed.

On the 15th of April a parliament, consisting of two representatives from each commune, besides deputies of the clergy, assembled at Alesani, and Corsica was solemnly declared an independent kingdom, under the sovereignty of Theodore von Neuhoff and his heirs. He, with a council of twenty-four members, held the reins of government, checked by the necessity of obtaining the consent of parliament to his measures and to all taxation. Corsicans only were to be admitted into the public service. When these regulations had been drafted they were publicly read by a doctor of law, Gaffori, and agreed to by the king and nation, the king swearing on the Gospel to respect the constitution. He was then conducted to the church, and crowned with a wreath of laurel and oak leaves.

Theodore was now King of Corsica by as legitimate a title as could well be found; but, unfortunately, he also styled himself 'Grandee of Spain, Lord of

\* Sismondi (*Hist. des Français*, ch. xlviiii.) confirms these figures and values the cargo at 'un million d'écus.' He insinuates that it was supplied by 'les deux puissances maritimes . . . par l'entremise de banquiers juifs d'Amsterdam.'

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Great Britain, Peer of France, Count of the Papal Dominions and Prince of the Empire.’\* These pretensions justify the charge that the newly-elected monarch ‘viewed things as one who is mad, or drunk, or in a fever.’† The Corsicans could hardly be expected to believe in such various titles. Moreover, it was not necessary to make such absurd pretensions. Corsica wanted a ruler and some money: a strong man with the sinews of war, even of civil war, for half the country was against him, or, at all events, not for him. His highflown titles caused too much to be expected, and he was unable to make the people forget their hopes of foreign support in the reality of victory and peace achieved at home.

The king proceeded to form a court. Giafferi and Paoli were created counts and appointed chief ministers. Xavier Matra, who had been the first to salute Theodore as king, became grand marshal of the palace and a marquis; Costa became chancellor and a count; Gaffori’s services were rewarded with the title of marquis, and he became the king’s secretary, while various other titles and appointments were conferred.

In the same month that the king began his reign Porto Vecchio and Sartene were taken from Genoa, and a striking proof of the popular trust in the monarchy was afforded by a temporary cessation of vendetta.

Manufactories of arms and cloth were established; and an attempt was made to encourage foreign

\* See Gregorovius, Bk. II. ch. v.

† Boswell, *Account of Corsica*, ch. ii.

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immigration by the offer of commercial privileges. A flag, green and yellow, with the motto, 'In te Domine speravi,' was adopted as the national ensign, and the final proof of independence, a national coinage, was instituted. But want of means caused the coinage to be a debased one, and the issue scanty. Eagerly bought by collectors, the Corsican money was of little use as currency.

The Senate of Genoa knew not what to make of this sudden apparition of monarchical government in Corsica, and feared the intrigues of foreign powers under the mask of Corsican royalty. Ere long, however, it became clear that they had only Theodore himself to deal with, and they began a war of manifestoes, branding him as an unprincipled and bankrupt adventurer, and setting a price on his head.

Theodore replied not only with words but with deeds, and formed the siege of Bastia, fighting himself with great gallantry. Some districts still held out for Genoa, and the king, unable to take Bastia, set forth to reduce his rebellious subjects to obedience. In this he succeeded, routing such Genoese troops as still kept the field, and punishing the districts in which rebels were found with great and ill-timed severity, thereby alienating the affection with which the people had begun to regard him.

The Genoese were confined to a few fortified cities on the coast, and the Corsicans undertook privateering on a small scale to keep off the Genoese cruisers. The Senate raised a force of fifteen hundred men, drawn from the prisons and galleys, and let them loose on the country to

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pillage and murder as they chose. They earned the title of 'Vittoli,' from the name of the murderer of Sampiero.

But the promised fleet of a friendly nation failed to arrive, and the people began to doubt their king's power to deliver them from their misery. In England the Genoese minister obtained a royal proclamation, forbidding any further supply of provisions, or other assistance to the Corsicans, while other powers made no sign.

Theodore produced sham letters from the Continent, which did not deceive the patriot leaders for long, and he found himself obliged to assemble parliament in September. A property tax was sanctioned; but the murmurs of the assembly at the non-arrival of the promised help drove the king to the desperate expedient of promising to abdicate unless it came by the end of October, or else to go himself to the Continent to arrange matters with his allies. He probably was getting alarmed and looked forward to making his escape, unless he should find himself strengthened by the events of the next few weeks.

The time of waiting was occupied by a visit to the southern portion of the island, where most of the old feudal nobility of Corsica lived, and even retained considerable influence. Luca Ornano, at the head of a deputation, met the king and conducted him in state to Sartene. Here he instituted his order of knighthood, 'Della Liberazione,' and in less than a month conferred the honour on over four hundred persons, many of them foreigners. The fees amounted to one thousand scudi for each knight, upon

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which sum the recipient of the honour was to receive ten per cent. per annum for life. If we may take the scudo as sixty-five shillings (the value of the gold scudo of Rome), the speculation was a good one (for Theodore), and even the silver scudo, worth four shillings, would bring in a considerable sum from four hundred knights. But we may doubt whether it was all paid. The king must have been obliged to accept many promises which, after his flight, would be forgotten.

A new party—the Indifferents—now sprang up, under the leadership of Aitelli and Rafaelli, and supported by Paoli. In spite of their name they were fighters, and repulsed the royal troops when attacked. The king decided to proceed to the Continent as he had promised, so he assembled a parliament at Sartene, and announced his intended departure. Giafferi, Paoli and Ornano were entrusted with the supreme power, and various other officials were appointed. Then, on 11th November 1736, the king proceeded to Aleria, whence he sailed for Leghorn under French colours, taking with him his chancellor, Costa, and a few officers of his household. The French flag protected him from a Genoese cruiser, and he landed at Leghorn disguised as an abbé. Thence he went to Florence, then to Rome, and so to Naples, where he left his suite and started by sea for Amsterdam, promising good news for his people on his arrival.

5th Nov.  
A.D. 1736.

But the exiled king never again ruled in Corsica, in spite of all his efforts. He did indeed from time to time contrive to send assistance to his former



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subjects, and more than once he attempted a landing. But French intervention in Corsican affairs made it impossible for him to achieve anything, and at one time he seemed willing to sell his rights to the king of France, to whom the bargain did not commend itself.\* His last attempt was made in 1743, when his pretensions to the Corsican crown made him a possibly useful tool to England and her allies. Under the protection of a British fleet he issued proclamations and demanded the surrender of Isola Rossa and Ajaccio. But it was soon evident that he had no adherents left, and England abandoned his cause. He retired to London, and so passes out of Corsican history. His last days were passed in great poverty, part of the time in a debtor's prison. A subscription was raised, but was insufficient to extricate him from his liabilities. Released shortly before his death, in 1756, he included the kingdom of Corsica in the schedule of his effects.

After Theodore's departure, in 1736, the regents, having obtained a parliamentary confirmation of their powers, proceeded to consider the question of accepting or rejecting certain proposals made by Genoa. The republic was tired of a war in which nothing could be won and much lost. It was recognised that without assistance Corsica could not be subdued. This assistance could now only be had from France; but a numerous party objected to handing over the places still held in Corsica to French troops. Finally, it was decided to offer a general pardon and twelve years' exemption from taxation. This was the offer for the regents to consider, and they laid it

\* See Vincens, Bk XII., ch. v.

## THE KINGDOM OF CORSICA

before parliament. There it was thought that Genoa should treat with Corsica as one nation with another, and the following terms were demanded—a general amnesty, the Corsicans no longer to be regarded as rebels, the right to carry arms, freedom of residence in, or departure from, the island, and the intervention of some foreign power to guarantee the execution of the treaty.

But Genoa insisted that the Corsicans were rebels and must be disarmed, and, above all, rejected any foreign intervention between masters and subjects. So the war continued, but nothing important was done on either side. The patriots were now in possession of almost the whole island. Genoa held Bastia, Calvi, Ajaccio and a few more places, but Porto Vecchio was in the hands of the Corsicans, besides which they had access to the sea at many points where stores could be landed in small vessels. Letters from King Theodore, promising help on a large scale, were published, and encouraged the people whilst depressing the Genoese, who never knew quite what to think of his expectations and really suspected some foreign intrigue hostile to themselves. A.D. 1737.

At last they decided to seek aid from France. On the question of the guarantee, so much insisted upon by Corsica, Genoa was obliged to give way, because, otherwise, France declined to intervene. The republic tried to bring in the empire as well, but the emperor was otherwise engaged, and, while willing to take part in a treaty, declined to send any troops, preferring to leave the work to France. But it was agreed that the Genoese dominion in

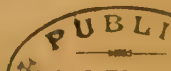
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Corsica should be recognised, and that the concessions made by the republic should only appear as her own spontaneous acts. The Corsicans themselves were not consulted in the matter, and (July 1737) a treaty was signed between Genoa and France, by which the latter became pledged to reduce 'the rebels' to subjection.

## CHAPTER X

### FRENCH INTERVENTION

ALTHOUGH no formal treaty had been made between A.D. 1735-37. France and Genoa until 1737, the state of Corsica had for some time occupied the attention of French statesmen. In 1735 M. de Campredon, the French minister at Genoa, contrived to keep his government informed on Corsican affairs, in spite of the subject being tabooed in the territory of the republic, the mention of Corsican victories sometimes even leading the speaker to the galleys, so jealously were state secrets guarded. He pointed out the impossibility of Genoa subduing the Corsicans, and at the same time indicated certain intrigues on the part of other powers, which he had reason to suspect. Spain boasted that she could dispose of the island at pleasure, and had Giafferi at her command; the kings of Naples and Sardinia both hoped to annex the country when Genoa should abandon it, an event which they regarded as highly probable; the emperor contemplated handing it over to Portugal, whilst Paoli counted on English support.



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As to the republic, Campredon declared that there would be but little regret at the loss of Corsica, and that a bargain might easily be struck whereby Genoa should rid herself of a troublesome possession to her own great advantage. With the English already at Gibraltar and in Minorca, could France see them also in Corsica without disquietude? Finally, he proposed that the Genoese should be persuaded to cede their rights to the King of France, whilst the Corsicans should be brought to consent to this measure.

The king and his council agreed, and gave Campredon authority to act as he suggested. He proceeded to gain adherents in Corsica, and ere long procured from them a petition to the King of France, asking him to help them. No date was attached to this document, in order that it might be produced when it could best serve its purpose.

Campredon believed that the Genoese would not much object to losing Corsica if the French would make a show of taking it by force, but thought there might be some difficulty when a voluntary surrender of their 'kingdom' was proposed. He therefore urged the king to send troops and annex the island without warning. But Cardinal Fleury could not consent to so fragrant a breach of international law, and Campredon was obliged to content himself with secretly gaining supporters, being promised all that was necessary for the purpose. Soon after he received instructions to let the matter drop.

But although at this period the French ministers did not think fit to risk the annexation of Corsica, still they were determined that no other power should get the island; and when, in 1737, Genoa was compelled

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to ask for help, France was not unwilling to have so good an excuse for armed intervention. Early in 1738 A.D. 1738. (February or March, the date is variously given) the Count de Boissieux arrived with six battalions of French soldiers, for whom Genoa had to find rations and quarters, besides incurring a considerable debt to France. These troops were to be kept apart from the Genoese garrisons, and entirely under their own commander, who was to act in concert with the Genoese governor.

The people at once prepared to resist this invasion, but were pacified by their chiefs, and consented to negotiate. France guaranteed a suspension of hostilities on the part of Genoa, and the patriots gave hostages for their good behaviour. Paoli and Giafferi wrote to Cardinal Fleury promising obedience to the king of France, 'our master.' The cardinal, in reply, pointed out that they were the subjects of Genoa, and warned them that the republic had the king's support.

At the same time the king was represented as taking a paternal interest in their welfare, whilst the republic was prepared to make all reasonable concessions. He asked them to name deputies to negotiate at Bastia, with the French general as mediator. Giafferi promised to send the deputies, but sustained the rights of Corsican nationality. The cardinal replied with a threat—'The king will be sorry to give up the part of a peacemaker in order to become your enemy.'

Thus the summer was consumed in negotiations, and in October a hastily drafted edict arrived, which was supposed to settle the whole matter. It contained amnesty for past offences, remission of taxes, now

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hopelessly in arrear, and the abolition of arbitrary condemnation and pardon by the Genoese governors.\* But the reservation of the Genoese sovereignty, and a clause ordering a general confiscation of arms, constituted a fatal bar to all hope of accommodation.

Besides the clauses enumerated above, it was also stipulated that additions might be made to the decree, if they were recognised as being for the good of the country. The deputies, who had assembled at Bastia, took advantage of this last clause to demand the recognition of a Corsican national organisation, which had almost nullified the suzerain rights of Genoa.

They also demanded the right to maintain a permanent representative to deal directly with the French government. Of these demands, which aimed at the practical abolition of Genoese sovereignty, no notice seems to have been taken.

The guarantee of the King of France, from which the Corsicans hoped so much, was now employed by Genoa to enforce the disarmament of the nation. Boissieux gave the Corsicans fifteen days' grace, and they were informed that their acceptance of the conditions offered was taken for granted, and that they would be disarmed by force unless they submitted. Deputies from various parts assembled at Orezza, and resolved to die with arms in their hands rather than submit. They issued a manifesto to this effect, and defied all their enemies.

In some districts it seemed likely that the arms

\* The power of Genoese magistrates to pardon offences, or to let the offenders go free, without trial, was almost a worse abuse of justice than the oppression exercised at various times. (*See* ch. vii.)



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would be surrendered quietly, but the event did not always justify this expectation. A detachment of four hundred men being sent to Borgo to disarm the population of the district, the people rose and shut the troops up in the village. Boissieux marched to the rescue with two thousand men, but was defeated and driven back to Bastia. Other detachments were cut up about the same time (winter of 1738-39), and the term 'Corsican Vespers' sufficiently shows the feeling which animated the nation.

These losses were partly revenged by the French commander, who caused some of his troops to imitate the costume of the Corsicans. The latter, deceived by the dress of their enemies, lost heavily in various encounters.

Now ensued disagreements between the French A.D. 1739. and Genoese authorities, and Boissieux was accused of 'partiality towards the rebels;' whilst, as if further to discourage him, ships bearing reinforcements from France went ashore near the mouth of the river Ostricone early in 1739, and the troops were surrounded and taken prisoners. Paoli had the good sense and humanity to treat them with kindness; but Boissieux, already fatigued by his campaign, and dispirited by his want of success and the constant disputes with the Genoese officers, sank under this last misfortune and died (February 1739).

The deputies at Bastia now dispersed, and the whole country was in confusion. Paoli and Giafferi published a letter to the hostages at Marseilles, blaming the Genoese for the recommencement of hostilities. They wrote with respect of the King of France, whose wishes, they declared, had not yet been made

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known. In the meantime they upheld their right to oppose the forcible imposition of the Genoese decree.

But Paoli had promised to cause the province of Balagna to submit, and he carried out his promise, finding means, however, to absent himself from the ceremony. He also caused letters to be written to the other chiefs, advising them to delay their submission, telling them that an amnesty had been arranged for, and there would always be time to profit by it. Only in Balagna were the arms surrendered.

The Marquis de Maillebois arrived, in March, to take command of the French troops. He brought with him considerable reinforcements, and had under his command sixteen battalions of infantry, besides some irregular troops and artillery. Finding that he must overawe the people before he could grant concessions, he acted with vigour and rapidity. His columns forced their way into the heart of the country and destroyed the crops, burning the villages and even cutting down vines and olives. But the French general, while acting with severity against his opponents, was far from really wishing to injure the Corsicans. He published everywhere the terms on which peace could be obtained; and was always willing to act in concert with the leaders of the people when they agreed to his terms, in spite of the efforts of Mari, the Genoese governor, who tried to persuade him to put no faith in their professions of amity.

Maillebois soon saw for himself that the magistrates placed in power by Genoa had no real influence, and

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that he must have recourse to the natural chiefs of the people if he wished to ensure tranquillity.

In the course of the year 1739 it became evident that the French commander's policy of vigour and conciliation must prevail, and the campaign ended in the Corsicans laying down their arms. About a thousand of the weapons surrendered had the Genoese government mark on them, and the republic demanded their restoration.

In July Giafferi and Paoli retired to Naples, where they were given military rank in the king's service, the latter being appointed to the command of a regiment of cavalry.

The nation being thus reduced to submission by a French army, the senate of Genoa proceeded to consider how to maintain order, and made various proposals to Maillebois, of which that officer took very little notice. 'Amongst other barbarous schemes, one was to transport a considerable number of the inhabitants and make them over to the King of France, to people his distant colonies.' (Boswell, ch. ii.) The French general, however, raised a Corsican regiment for service in the French army, a kind of exile which was by no means disliked by the Corsicans.

The general desired peace and happiness for the island and people. Mari regarded those who had submitted as disguised rebels, and endeavoured to exclude them from the markets at Bastia, while his general treatment of the unfortunate people drew from Maillebois a grave and dignified rebuke. He pointed out that if the Genoese regarded the Corsicans as their subjects, they should give them the assistance

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which they required for their subsistence—‘*Et vous devez en ministre sage faire l'impossible pour y parvenir.*’ But if Genoa desired to destroy the nation, the king’s troops could not be used for any such purpose. (*See Vincens, Bk. XII., ch. iv.*) He endeavoured to bring the republic to establish an equitable rule, under which Genoese sovereignty should harmonise with the rights of the subject nation, and permit of the effectual exercise of the French guarantee. For this purpose he considered it essential that the French should occupy some of the seaports.

A.D. 1740.

In 1740 the French Court informed the Senate that, the war being at an end, the king was disposed to withdraw his troops. Now, the treaty under which France had sent troops to Corsica also bound her to protect the Continental possessions of Genoa until the end of the Corsican war. Moreover, the senators of Genoa were sufficiently well aware that the obedience of the Corsicans depended upon the presence of the French. They therefore hastened to reply that they were not sure if the submission and disarmament had been really completed, and added, that the departure of the troops might lead the islanders to believe that the period of the king’s guarantee had expired, and was no longer binding upon them. They therefore hoped to retain at least a part of the army under Maillebois.

France offered six battalions: these troops to hold Ajaccio, Calvi and the road between those cities, which the king should fortify and strengthen as he thought fit. These conditions alarmed Genoa, and led to more discussion. The death of the Emperor Charles VI. (October 1740) occurred before anything

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was settled. The imminence of a Continental war made it imperative to recall the troops to France. They were recalled, and the Genoese and Corsicans left to themselves.

## CHAPTER XI

### CONFUSION

A.D. 1741-46. THE withdrawal of the French army left Genoa face to face with a nation ready to snatch at any excuse for renewing the struggle, whilst her own garrison in the island was too small to maintain authority. The Genoese nobility had almost ceased to be either soldiers or sailors, and the troops of the republic were both few in number and ill commanded. The wealth which had once been disseminated amongst the citizens was now in the hands of a few families, who relied on money rather than on arms for their influence and safety. To many of the ruling class Corsica seemed merely a burden, and to sell it, or even give it away, was regarded as the wisest course. But there was still some pride in the city of palaces, and its rulers had to make some effort to retain their 'kingdom.' A small reinforcement was sent to the governor of Corsica, but not enough to enable him to act with any vigour in case of trouble.

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The peace now enjoyed in the island was properly attributed to France, and the thanks of the Senate and government were conveyed to the king. But at Genoa itself men said that France had taken their money and done nothing to earn it.

At Bastia, Mari, glad to be free from the control of his protectors, set to work to recover his former power. Against such as had not submitted new severities were proclaimed; but so long as they kept to the hill country his proclamations could do them little harm. The French 'guarantee' was soon forgotten, and the people were invited to send deputies to swear allegiance to Genoa; but nobody came. Then the governor called together some syndics, or other officers, to the number of eighteen; and under the title of 'nobility of this side and the other side of the mountains,' pretended to regard them as the legal representatives of the nation, and undertook to forward their demands to the Senate.

But the omission of the magic word 'guarantee' led to the disavowal of the eighteen by their compatriots, whilst the Senate took no notice of their petitions. Mari was succeeded by Domenico Spinola, who attempted to revive the tax of the 'due seini,' with the natural result. Meetings were held, several of the exiled chiefs showed themselves again, and a furious revolt broke out, but was for a time appeased, and comparative tranquillity existed until 1743.

The attempted landing of King Theodore in this A.D. 1743. year (*see* ch. ix.), although productive of no good results to himself, was, nevertheless, very alarming to



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the Genoese, who would gladly have parted with their embarrassing dependency. But in the general confusion prevailing all over Europe they could find no means to further their interests, no power willing to either purchase or exchange territory. Mari reappeared in Corsica, and contrived to bring together a kind of national assembly, apparently docile, but really opportunist.

Some of the Corsican leaders were not without private cause of hatred to Genoa. The house of Dr Gaffori, at Corte, was attacked by a party of Genoese during his absence, with the design of capturing his wife. She, however, with the assistance of some friends, protected herself until her husband arrived, with a band of Corsicans, and rescued her.\*

This man now came to the front, and for some years was the real leader of the nation.

Another leader, Count Domenico Rivarola, had forfeited an estate in the territory of Genoa, on the mainland, for his fidelity to Corsica, and had experienced in his own family a proof of 'the mildness and love with which the republic of Genoa governs her people' (*see* a memorial quoted by Boswell, ch. ii.). He had been for a time the Genoese commissary in Balagna, but had retired to Leghorn, in despair of mitigating the evil government around him. His two sons, crossing from Corsica to the mainland, fell into the power of the Genoese, who threw them into prison, and made their father's submission the price of their release. He preferred his country's interests to those of his family and

\* *See* Gregorovius, Bk. VIII., ch. ii.

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refused, but had the felicity of afterwards recovering the boys in safety.

In 1745 it was declared that no oath of allegiance, A.D. 1745. other than that to King Theodore, was binding on a Corsican, although, as a matter of fact, there was no hope whatever of the exiled king regaining his crown. Gaffori, perhaps, was still secretly loyal to him.

Corte was occupied by a Genoese garrison, and Gaffori laid siege to it. His son, a child, wandered from the camp and was taken prisoner. The Genoese commander, to intimidate the besiegers, had the child tied to the wall, where the firing from his father's army endangered his life. The fire was silenced, but Gaffori himself ordered his gunners to recommence. A breach was made, the citadel stormed, and the boy remained uninjured.\*

The taking of Corte by Gaffori was soon followed by his appointment, together with Venturini and Matra, as 'protectors of the kingdom,' a title to which Gaffori certainly had good right, but Matra was much suspected of being a secret adherent of Genoa.

In 1746 Rivarola, now in the Sardinian service, 1746. made an attempt, under the flag of that power, to drive out the Genoese garrisons. His expedition was a small one, only from two to three hundred men, but he had the help of British ships, and counted on the support of the people in any attack on the Genoese. In the name of the King of Sardinia he seized Bastia, the defences of that place being unable

\* Boswell states that he heard this story from the younger Gaffori himself.

## THE HISTORY OF CORSICA

to hold out against the British fire. A section of the Corsicans, grateful for his aid, proclaimed him general of the nation ; but neither Gaffori nor Matra took part in this proceeding, which they viewed with small satisfaction.

An assembly was held at Bastia, but the unanimity expected by Rivarola was not apparent. The meeting, in fact, broke up in disorder, which nearly culminated in bloodshed. Bastia was the least likely place in Corsica for revolution. It had been for many generations the seat of the Genoese government in the island, and many of the inhabitants were inclined to prefer Genoa to Sardinia—a monarchy which indeed took its name from an island which had as yet derived but little benefit from the House of Savoy.

It could scarcely be expected that the British commander would venture much in a country where he found such dissension amongst the national leaders, and ere long Rivarola was left to fight his own battles. As soon as the English left he found Bastia untenable, and retired to San Fiorenzo. Gaffori and Matra came to terms with their rival, and there still seemed some chance of success, especially as the inhabitants of Bastia decided to hold that city themselves and keep out the Genoese. But Mari overawed them, and persuaded them not only to submit, but also to surrender a large number of Rivarola's supporters. We must not forget that in 1746 the city of Genoa was actually occupied by Austrian troops, and the Bank of St George all but ruined. The Genoese at last drove out the invaders ; but their whole energy was needed at home, and they were in no condition to help their officers in Corsica.

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The latter certainly seem entitled to some credit for retaining any hold on the island at all.

Gaffori is said to have been among the prisoners taken by Mari, who sent them, over fifty in number, to Genoa, where ten were executed, in spite of the fact that their safety had been guaranteed at the time of their surrender. Gaffori himself escaped, and appears to have soon managed to return home.

The patriots now realised their mistake in not having secured British aid when it was available, and sent envoys to Lord Bristol, then ambassador at Turin, to request the protection of England. Rivarola was one of these envoys, and waited with his colleague until an answer came from England. The reply was disappointing, amounting, in fact, to a polite refusal, 'hoping the Corsicans would preserve the same obliging sentiments' (Boswell, ch. ii.), but declining to enter into a treaty.

Count Rivarola remained at Turin, and in 1748 Matra quitted Corsica, leaving Gaffori undisputed master of the island.

Meanwhile at Genoa all eyes turned again to France for help; but nothing was done. Finally, it was decided to attempt nothing until a general peace was signed, when it was hoped that both France and Spain would assist in the subjugation of Corsica.

Thus Gaffori gradually attained to supreme power, A.D. 1748. if such it could be called, in a country torn from end to end by rival factions and families, whose private vendetta sometimes obscured their views of national policy.

One more attempt was made by Rivarola, who, in

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1748, again took Bastia; but Richelieu, who commanded the French troops at Genoa, sent a small force and drove him out again. It was discovered that Rivarola's expedition was in the nature of an advanced guard. The King of Sardinia was preparing a force of four thousand men to reduce the island. The Senate, at last really frightened, besought Richelieu to send more troops to Corsica, and he sent garrisons to Calvi, Bonifacio, Ajaccio and Bastia, the whole force being under command of General de Cursay.

The Sardinian expedition actually started, but was recalled.

Rivarola died at Turin in April 1748, having to the last done his best for his country.

When peace was restored to Europe, at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, several places in Northern Italy fell to the share of the King of Sardinia, from whom no further aid could now be expected by the Corsicans, as it was not to his interest to risk a dispute with France. The peace had also guaranteed to Genoa all her former possessions, and no foreign enemy being likely to attack Corsica, there seemed no need to keep the French troops in the island any longer. But a sudden evacuation of the places held by France would cause the risk of these places falling into the hands of the Corsicans, who, under Gaffori's able leadership, would be prompt to take so good an opportunity of getting command of the most important seaports in the island. It was therefore decided that Cursay and his troops should remain until the republic could arrange for the occupation of the ports by Genoese garrisons.

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Under Louis XV. magnanimity in foreign policy was fashionable, and in 1748 France did not covet Corsica, but at the same time it is certain that she intended no other power to take the island. It was therefore desirable that Genoa should retain her property, and even be assisted in doing so; and to this end it was necessary to bring about some fair arrangement between the islanders and their nominal rulers. The former could hardly be brought to any accommodation, and the latter scarce knew what they wanted themselves. Genoa, in the distress caused by the Continental war, had been assisted with money by France since 1746. If France now withdrew her troops she might also withdraw her subsidies. The Genoese officers in Corsica would have risked everything to deliver themselves from French control, while the Senate well knew that without French aid all was lost. Thus the different parties in the republic, the French Court, its representatives at Genoa and its generals in Corsica, besides the various factions in the island, all held different views and worked for different objects.

General de Cursay and Gaffori, however, came to A. D. 1749-50. an understanding, and between them brought the patriots to promise obedience to the King of France. Two great meetings were held. At the first, called by Gaffori, it was decided that the destinies of the nation should be entrusted to the king; at the second, for which Cursay was responsible, the deputies swore submission to the king's wishes.

Chauvelin had succeeded Richelieu at Genoa as the French commander and envoy. Both he and his predecessor would have preferred open annexation, but

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that being out of the question they insisted upon the obligation of France keeping a military force in the island and holding the coast fortresses, without which it would be impossible to ensure compliance with the wishes of the French government.

The French ministry hoped to make some arrangement which should give the Corsicans reasonable liberty, and, moreover, saw that it would be well to get the regular assent of the nation, through properly elected delegates, to whatever regulations were made. This was opposed by the senators of Genoa, who desired that the republic should give an order and the Corsicans obey it.

A.D. 1751. At last, in 1751, it was arranged that a treaty, or rather a document containing regulations for the administration of government, should be first submitted to the Senate, and then to the Corsican assembly, the latter being invited to give the national assent to its provisions. This done, the Genoese governor was to publish the new regulations under the form of an edict issued by the republic. The regulations allowed the Corsicans more privileges than they had hitherto possessed, and their nationality was recognised. France gave more subsidies to Genoa, and the occupation was to terminate when the Senate should so desire. Meanwhile the French held Calvi.

The recognition of their nationality was in itself enough to satisfy the Corsicans, and General de Cursay convened an assembly which was quite willing to consent to whatever he wished. He, assured of his own power in the island, was with difficulty restrained from publishing the regulations on his own



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authority, without waiting for the Genoese decree on the subject.

For a time all appeared to be going on smoothly, A. D. 1752. but soon new 'incidents' took place. Cursay published orders in his own name; and, on his own authority, took measures against villages which did not submit to the regulations.

At San Fiorenzo there was a mixed garrison of French and Genoese troops. Suddenly the latter were expelled. Cursay excused himself by saying that he had given no orders, except in concert with Gaffori, an excuse which only further incensed the Genoese.

The Corsicans were simply waiting for the French to leave in order to seize all the coast towns, if possible; and in this instance Gaffori had taken his measures in advance, and got rid of the Genoese garrison.

Accusations were made against Cursay, who was charged with seeking the crown of Corsica for himself. Whether this charge was, or was not, believed by the French Court cannot be known, but he was sent for to Paris. Arrested on his journey, by the king's order, he was imprisoned. Later on he was released, and employed elsewhere; but his departure from Corsica, where he was very popular, was the signal for a fresh outbreak of war. The people rose *en masse*, a parliament assembled at Orezza, and Gaffori was appointed general and governor of the country.

In the general confusion the officers of the republic thought they saw their opportunity. It became clear that the new regulations could not be obeyed. The French troops were subjected to annoyance, even to

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insult, by the Genoese governor, and the king decided to withdraw them, but consented to pay the subsidy already promised. The Senate, now able to send troops, agreed to this arrangement, and demanded a prompt evacuation of the ports.

As the French troops quitted the coast towns, Genoese detachments, brought by sea, entered them; but they had no power in the interior, and could scarcely keep open communications between the places they actually held.

The chiefs of the nation, united under Gaffori, swore to have no dealings with their old enemies the Genoese; and Grimaldi, now the representative of the republic, despaired of defeating the patriots.

A. D. 1753.

But the dreadful power of the vendetta came to his assistance. Gaffori was involved in a vendetta, and his own brother (Anton-Francesco) was persuaded to betray him. In October 1753 the Corsican chief was surprised and murdered. Some of the assassins escaped, but Anton-Francesco was taken and put to death, it is said, in the presence of his brother's widow.

Amongst Gaffori's supporters was a son of Giacinto Paoli, who was held in great respect. This man, Clement Paoli, was distinguished for his courage, and, after the death of the general, he became one of the principal chiefs of the nation; but the peculiar bent of his disposition, severely religious and very studious, taciturn and a lover of solitude, made him unfit to take the lead for any length of time.

1754. Gaffori had selected fit men for his lieutenants; and Clement Paoli, with the aid of Dr Grimaldi,

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Santucci, Frediani, and some more of the late general's friends, was able for some time to carry on the government and keep the Genoese at arm's length. It was pronounced a crime worthy of death to even propose to negotiate ; and the Corsicans were united in hatred of their old oppressors and a passionate desire for independence, but, unfortunately, were not united amongst themselves.

The Genoese had no power outside their fortresses, but were known to be preparing for another effort. The nation was torn to pieces by faction and vendetta ; the laws were scarcely administered at all ; agriculture, trade and science were neglected ; in fact, all was in confusion.

The old family of Matra, formerly 'caporali,' and now strongly suspected of sympathy with Genoa, had a strong party. The head of this family, Emanuele Matra, a relation of Gaffori's former colleague, was a soldier of some experience, and it was thought that he aimed at acquiring the office of general of the people.

An oligarchy had never been successful in Corsica ; one leader, with competent lieutenants, had always proved more capable of uniting the nation. This one man, Clement Paoli said he could provide ; and he brought over his colleagues to share his opinion, in spite of his nominee being his own brother, and having for many years past lived at Naples. But the nation both respected and loved the Paoli—a family which had already done and suffered much for liberty. Old Giacinto approved the national choice, and overcame the young man's hesitation to undertake so great a task as he foresaw would be his ; and, in April 1755, A.D. 1755.

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the illustrious Pascal Paoli bade farewell to his father, and embarked on a career of noble endeavour more admirable than that of the proudest of conquerors or monarchs.

## CHAPTER XII

### PAOLI

PASCAL PAOLI was about thirty years of age when he was called to the leadership of the nation. Born in the pieve of Rostino, his boyhood was spent in Corsica; at the age of fourteen he went into exile with his father at Naples, where his education was completed. Giacinto Paoli, being a colonel of cavalry in the Neapolitan service, his son obtained a commission in his regiment; and when he was summoned to Corsica, he had obtained the rank of captain and had seen some service in Calabria.

In April 1755 he landed at Aleria; and having <sup>A. D. 1755.</sup> been elected deputy for his native place, Rostino, he attended an assembly at San Antonio della Casabianca, and was at once appointed general of the nation.

For this honour he was, of course, prepared and had come to undertake the office. His brother and the other chiefs had arranged for his appointment, which may have been a kind of compromise to allay the jealousy of the various claimants for the supreme power. When he appeared before the assembled deputies, his manner, quiet and dignified, combined with his eloquence and good looks, quickly decided them in favour of the son and brother of two of their

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favourite heroes. In July he assumed office, and at once found himself compelled to take up arms to vindicate his authority.

Emanuele Matra, whose ambition and power have already been mentioned, refused to submit to the newly-appointed general, against whom he openly declared, with the support of numerous adherents. Paoli, desirous of avoiding a civil war, proposed a suspension of hostilities, in order that the rival claims of himself and Matra might be decided by the popular vote. The later refused, relying on his military talent and experience, and counting also on  
A.D. 1755-56. Genoese support. After some encounters Matra was forced to submit, but again took the field early in 1756 and surprised the general in a disadvantageous position. Paoli was obliged to take refuge, with a few followers, in a convent near Alando, which he hastily fortified. Fortunately his brother had heard of his danger and was actively gathering friends for a rescue. An unexpected ally was also found. In the neighbourhood lived the family of Cervoni, between whom and the Paoli there was a vendetta. But Thomas Cervoni was persuaded by his mother to forget the quarrel and assist the general chosen by the nation. He joined his forces to those already raised by Clement Paoli, and together they advanced against Matra, sounding the conch\* as they went to apprise the garrison of their approach. Matra had already set fire to the doors of the convent when they arrived. The besiegers, taken between two

\* Conch, a large triton shell, pierced at one end, at that time the only military musical instrument used in Corsica. See Boswell, *Account of Corsica*; and Valery, *Liv. I.*, ch. xlv.

## PAOLI

fires, were put to flight, leaving many dead on the field. Matra, wounded in the leg, fought on till a ball, fired by Cervoni, killed him. Pascal Paoli could respect a brave enemy, and openly regretted the loss of a good soldier, whose arms might have well served his country; but when he turned to thank his rescuer, Cervoni had already gone. To serve Corsica he had saved her first citizen, but his hatred to the Paoli was unappeased; he would have none of their friendship.\*

Genoa was now almost helpless. Swiss and A.D. 1756. German troops were hired to supplement those of the republic, and on one occasion they attacked Paoli's headquarters at Furiani, near Bastia, but without success. These mercenary troops deserted to Paoli in great numbers, and, but for the want of artillery, he might have taken the coast fortresses. At Genoa it was thought that the money with which he paid the deserters from their troops came from England.

The naval operations in the Mediterranean which eventually led to England losing Minorca, gave France a renewed interest to Corsica, owing to the supposed understanding between England and Paoli. Genoa had been subsidised by France to enable her to hold the island, and now France insisted on employing troops to defend it; and engineers were sent to inspect the fortifications, a measure which gave great offence to Genoa. Paoli openly announced the approach of an English fleet, and boasted that a month would suffice for the expulsion of the Genoese from Corsica; but, in spite of this, the

\* See *Vie et Memoires du Général Dumouriez*, Vol. I., note.



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republic declared that the matter was not pressing, and that it would be time enough to call for French assistance when the English really appeared. But the king threatened to take the initiative himself, unless the republic promptly asked him to send troops to the island.

Sorba, the Genoese *chargé d'affaires* in France, had lived long enough in that country to understand French policy, and he saw that some agreement must be arrived at. It was therefore settled that French troops should occupy Calvi, Ajaccio and San Fiorenzo. The republic desired to share in the occupation of these cities, but on this point Sorba had to give way. However, it was arranged that the French commanders should have no dealings with Paoli and his adherents, who were not to be allowed access to the places occupied by France.

Three thousand men, under the Marquis de Castries, accordingly occupied the three cities as arranged. Although they were to have no dealings with Paoli, he, nevertheless, declared that he saw their arrival with pleasure, as their presence would assist him in restoring order throughout the country. Count de Vaux soon replaced De Castries, and there were some collisions between the French and the Corsicans, but Paoli contrived to restore harmony.\* De Vaux  
A.D. 1756-57. admitted Corsicans into the places occupied by his troops, under pretence of raising a regiment of cavalry in the island; a proceeding which gave great umbrage to the Genoese authorities, who were also

\* Vincens (Bk. XII., ch. v.) gives this account of De Vaux in Corsica. Sismondi does not mention him at all, merely saying that the French remained neutral, and retired after two years (ch. lv.).

## PAOLI

offended at his assembling the notables of a province to ascertain if he could depend upon their assistance in case of an attack being made by the English.

But Admiral de la Galissonnière had frightened the British fleet away in May 1756, and the English made no attempt on Corsica. The French admiral had thus justified the republic in objecting to the occupation, and it is doubtful whether, with the small body of troops under his command, De Vaux could have successfully resisted a disembarkation, supported by the guns of a fleet, if the English really had attempted a landing.

Ere long De Vaux and his troops were required on the Continent, so the French garrisons were withdrawn; and the republic, having previously objected to their coming, now complained that they had been taken away without warning. But the true ground of complaint was the withdrawal of the subsidy, hitherto paid by France to enable Genoa to retain her grasp on the island.

Paoli was not slow to take advantage of the weak- A.D. 1758.  
ness of his enemies, and, in 1758, he laid siege to Rogliano in Cap-Corse, and blockaded Bastia, having at his disposal an army of near five thousand men for these operations.

In the meantime he had again been troubled by the Matra family, a brother of his former antagonist having rebelled against him. But the rising was quickly suppressed, and the general more powerful than ever; in fact, his power was all but absolute, although he always respected the form of government of which he was himself, to a great extent, the originator.

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A.D. 1755-67.

The Corsican ruler was naturally obliged to be a soldier, but it is in Paoli's internal administration, and the perseverance with which he strove to improve the constitution and foster the well-being of the nation he ruled, that we find his real title to greatness.

When he arrived in Corsica, in 1755, he found the country in the utmost disorder, principally owing to the fact that justice was scarcely administered at all, and the only check on evil-doers was the vendetta. His first efforts were directed against this terrible scourge, which was costing the nation several hundred lives every year. He sent priests to preach forgiveness throughout the land, and himself travelled far and wide, labouring to reconcile families at enmity with each other. At the same time severe penalties were enforced for homicide, especially in cases where, as was not uncommon, a man, failing to kill his enemy, satisfied the requirements of the vendetta by killing one of his foe's relations. In such cases it was enacted that the penalty should be, not merely death, but infamy, a pillar being erected to mark the spot of the crime and record the disgrace of the murderer.

A vendetta was sometimes terminated by the intervention of mutual friends, or arbitrators, who were known as 'parolanti.'

An agreement made and sworn to in their presence was regarded as peculiarly sacred, and such an oath was seldom violated. Under Paoli's government the 'pillar of infamy' was awarded to those who renewed a vendetta after taking the oath of reconciliation.

One of the first victims of the new severity of the laws was one of the general's own relations, who,

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having committed a murder in the course of a vendetta, was arrested and executed. The firm and impartial administration of justice, combined with the general's persuasive eloquence, gradually convinced the Corsicans that private revenge was neither the only nor the best means of protecting their honour or property. Paoli did not eradicate the evil entirely, but he mitigated it to a very great extent. It is stated that in a few years the population was increased by many thousands, in spite of the numbers killed in action, and this increase is attributed mainly to the suppression of the vendetta.\*

In his measures against the vendetta Paoli did not really institute new penalties. The 'pillar of infamy' was known before his day as the suitable punishment for disgraceful conduct; but he branded as disgraceful deeds which had often not been recognised as such, thereby enlisting the point of honour on the side of law and order.

The Corsican bishops, whose duties lay in the island, and whose revenues were drawn from it, were all in the Genoese interest, and thoroughly opposed to the independence of the nation. For many years they had been absent from their posts, and the government determined to recall them. But they refused to return, although promised protection by Paoli. On this he applied to the Pope, complaining that the Corsican bishops had abandoned their flocks, and praying him to intervene. The Pope at once admitted the justice of his complaint, and sent Crescentio de Angelis, Bishop of Segni, as apostolic visitor, with authority to inquire into the abuse

\* Boswell, *Account of Corsica*, ch. ii.

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complained of, and apply whatever remedy he thought fit.

This measure, which both recognised the independence of the Corsican government, and entirely ignored the Genoese sovereignty, gave great offence at Genoa. Protesting the deepest devotion to the Pope, the Senate also protested against his making any provision for the spiritual welfare of the Corsicans without leave from Genoa. But this protest was not listened to, and the bishop was sent in spite of it. The Genoese, by proclamation, forbade his entry into Corsica, and refused permission for him to exercise his ecclesiastical functions in their territories. Moreover, they offered a reward for his apprehension, and sent ships to intercept him. These ships were wrecked off Bastia, and the bishop landed in safety (April 1760). The Pope annulled the proclamation issued by the Genoese, whereupon they replied by publicly tearing up his edict. It almost seemed as though the republic would be put under an interdict, but this remedy had been tried before without much success, and the Pope refrained. His object indeed had been gained, in spite of the wrath of Genoa; the Bishop of Segni having been received with great joy in Corsica, where he soon obtained much influence, while the insulting proclamation of the republic had been burnt by the common hangman at Corte.

The Corsican bishops lost their sees, and Paoli at once sequestrated their revenues. The people were somewhat alarmed at this seizure of Church property, but the general, while admitting that the altar should nourish its ministers, pointed out that the tithes of those who fail to serve the altar are the property

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of the poor. This reasoning satisfied the public conscience, and the government thus came into possession of a goodly portion of the tithes. But both Pascal and Clement Paoli were religious men, and the Church did not suffer in reality, only the revenues of the absentee bishops and of sinecures being forfeited. The numerous convents still existed, and the parish priests were strong supporters of the government. Both priests and friars were always to be found on the side of the patriots. Of nuns there were but few, the women of Corsica being perhaps more industrious, or less religious, than the men.

The reproach of idleness has often been brought against the Corsicans; but with greater security for life and property there came also more inclination for work. The difficulty of obtaining supplies from abroad made it imperative that sufficient food should be raised at home, and under Paoli's government agriculture and commerce revived.

In 1758, with the help of the Arena, Blasini and Savelli families, he founded the port of Isola Rossa, which he hoped to make the rival of Algajola, whose citizens were devoted to Genoa.\* The new town prospered, and attracted many from the mountains to the sea, and in time became the headquarters of the Corsican fleet, which, though small, increased the risks of Genoese merchants. The old accusation of piracy could scarcely be brought against the Corsicans, who claimed independence,

\* Isola Rossa is mentioned before this period. Presumably Paoli enlarged and improved the harbour, and made it a place of more importance than it had been hitherto.

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and were openly at war with Genoa ; but no doubt there was a good deal of privateering, and the crew of a Genoese vessel might well fear the Corsican flag.

Commerce was assisted by the humanity and liberality of the general. A Tunisian ship having been wrecked on the coast, the peasantry of the neighbourhood seized the cargo, but Paoli caused it to be restored, and sent the shipwrecked crew home in charge of officers selected for the purpose. This unexpected kindness was suitably acknowledged by the Bey of Tunis, who sent an embassy to thank the ruler of Corsica, and to assure him that in his dominions all Corsicans should be made welcome. This led to the opening of the north coast of Africa to Corsican traders.

They could fight as well as trade. In 1767, a small Corsican ship being pursued by a Turkish galley, the crew, rather than surrender, boarded the Turk, and fought with great courage. When almost overcome by numbers, they were rescued by a Maltese galley, the Turks were defeated and their ship captured.

A knight of Malta, Count de Perez (or Peres), was entrusted with the command of the Corsican fleet, and the few towns on the coast still in the hands of Genoa were closely blockaded, while their inhabitants came to envy the prosperity of the patriots, whom they had formerly despised as rebels.

The old nobility of Corsica had been in possession of many feudal rights and privileges, which had never been abolished by law. In the part of the country known as the Terra del Commune the



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feudal nobles had long since lost their power, but in Cap-Corse, and in the south (di La dei Monti), although the policy of Genoa had been to weaken them, and their old castles were mostly in ruins, they still retained many of their ancient rights. Their influence, indeed, was so great, and their use of it, in some cases, so bad, that Boswell mentions a Corsican who told him 'that supposing the republic had abandoned its pretensions over Corsica, so that the peasants should not have been obliged to rise against the Genoese, they would have risen against the signors.'\*

During the long war with Genoa the nobles had found their power slipping away from them. The war had originally broken out in a part of the country where they had no jurisdiction, and for a time they do not appear to have openly joined the national cause, although they certainly were supporters of the unfortunate King Theodore. Under Paoli's firm government the country was free from internal warfare, and the peasants of the south were by no means willing to submit to the old feudal jurisdiction. But the signori made several applications for the restoration of what they conceived to be their rights; and upon Paoli fell the task of arranging matters so that the people should retain their hard won freedom, whilst the landowners, many of whom were wealthy and influential, should not be made discontented under his rule.

A compromise was arrived at, whereby the noblemen of a province were exempted from appearing before the provincial tribunals, and, upon their own

\* Boswell, *Account of Corsica*, ch. iii.

## THE HISTORY OF CORSICA

fiefs, were given the power to determine causes between the peasants. But they were responsible, both personally and for their administration of justice, to the supreme council and to the Court of Syndicato. They thus discharged the duties of several communal and provincial offices without cost to the state, and, being subject to the higher authorities, they were restricted from any great abuse of their powers.\*

Local government was organised on the old plan of Terra del Commune, omitting the caporali. In each village annual elections were held to choose a podestà and two 'padri del commune,' all three being re-eligible. These three together were empowered to judge small civil cases, the podestà by himself deciding those cases in which the sum in dispute did not exceed ten livres (say ten shillings).

For more important suits the provincial courts, also elected annually, were the tribunals † ; and from them appeal was allowed to the Rota Civile, a court composed of three judges appointed by the supreme council.

In criminal cases the court was always assisted by a jury of six, whose verdict was given on the

\* A Corsican gentleman once observed to me that there evidently had never been a noble class in Corsica, recognised as such ; and yet I noticed that he had a title, which was recognised by others although apparently not claimed by himself. Many Corsicans have titles which have been granted by foreign rulers, and probably they do not represent the old feudal lords who are referred to in the text. Throughout this work the term 'nobleman' or 'signor' should be taken to mean the holder of a fief, or a member of a family with feudal rights, not necessarily a man with a title.

† In theory their decisions were final, but complaint could be made in case of manifest injustice.

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evidence adduced. Death sentences required the approval of the supreme council.

The Court of *Syndicato* was elected by parliament, and had the right to hear appeals and inquire into the administration of the provincial courts, for which purpose its members visited various parts of the country. This court was supreme, as indeed, theoretically, was the court of the same name under the Bank of St George. Paoli was usually a member of the *syndicato*. It was not his custom to attend the sittings of the court, but when suitors were not content with its decisions he would himself listen to their complaints, and generally contrived to satisfy them.

Besides his magisterial duties, the *podestà* of a commune or village was the representative of the government in his own district, and was the proper channel of communication between government and people. The *padri del commune* had charge of the local arrangements, including police, and were expected to assemble their constituents to discuss all matters of importance. But in many villages the inconvenience of constant public meetings was avoided by the election of councillors, to whom the powers of the community were delegated, and who, with the *podestà* and 'fathers,' formed a village council. There were also instances of more than one *podestà* being elected in the same parish, in which case the powers of the office remained the same as if it had had only one holder.

The parliament was known as the '*consultà*,' the name being an old one, and now applied to a more regularly elected assembly than in former times.

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The members, called 'procurators,' were elected annually by the votes of all citizens over twenty-five years of age, and received a small payment to cover the expense of attending the sessions at Corte.

In numbers the *consultà* was by no means regular. In some cases one procurator might be elected for the whole of a *pieve* (parish), in others each village would send its own member; but the validity of every election was attested by the signature of a notary-public, the procurator being obliged to deliver this document to the 'great chancellor of the kingdom' on arrival at the Corte.

In addition to the ordinary members, there were also summoned to the *consultà* men of eminence in the state, such as former members of the supreme council and near relatives of those who had lately lost their lives in battle. Finally, there were representatives of the clergy and of the provincial magistrates.

The *consultà* elected the 'supreme council,' which consisted of nine members, representing the nine provinces of Corsica. Each province, by its procurators, elected its own representative, whose election then required confirmation by a majority of the procurators of the other provinces. This council, with the general of the kingdom as its president, was the chief authority of the nation, one of its members being the chancellor, and the general not being permitted to take any steps of importance without its consent. The supreme council had also the power of postponing any measure brought before parliament by a private member until the next session, in order that it might be further considered.

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The members of this council were not all in constant residence at the capital. Three only were necessary at a time, except during the session of the *consultà*, and the general could require the attendance of the rest whenever he thought fit.

The *consultà*, besides choosing the supreme council and the Court of *Syndicato*, also elected its own president, to whom were handed the proposals of government for new laws; and its 'orator,' whose business it was to read to the members all documents submitted for their consideration, and to receive and take charge of all petitions. Both president and orator were elected by an elaborate process of elimination, which must have taken up a good deal of time.

The provincial magistrates were chosen by the procurators of their provinces every year, and, as a rule, were five in number—a president, two 'assessors' or assistants, an auditor and a chancellor. The two last received payment in cash, the others in the shape of provisions, and they were protected by a small body of troops. But the number of members of a provincial magistracy was not invariable, some irregularities being permitted, just as in the village councils.

It is evident that much time must have been spent in these numerous elections. We see that every year the people had to elect *podestàs*, fathers of the community, village councils and most of the procurators. The latter, in their turn, had to elect all the provincial magistrates, their own president and 'orator,' the supreme council and the Court of *Syndicato*, before they could attend to public business.

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Paoli himself was the only permanent office-bearer, and, being usually a member of the *syndicato*, and always president of the supreme council, in which he had both a vote and a casting vote, it will readily be admitted that his authority, in spite of all apparent checks, must have been supreme, almost absolute. As his title implies, he had the command of the military force of the kingdom, so that he could always enforce his authority if necessary. But this was seldom the case, his popularity increased as years went on, and he was regarded by his fellow-countrymen with the deepest love and reverence.

He never married, and his life was entirely devoted to the service of Corsica. He is described as 'tall, strong and well made,'\* his complexion fair, and his expression pleasing, his glance keen and penetrating. In manner he was polite, but reserved; his memory was very good, and his general knowledge extensive. He was a good classical scholar, and particularly fond of Plutarch's writings. He possessed some English books, of which Boswell gives a curious list.—'Some volumes of the *Spectator* and *Tatler*, *Pope's Essay on Man*, *Gulliver's Travels*, a history of France in old English, and *Barclay's Apology for the Quakers*.' His visitor adds that he afterwards sent him some more English books.

Paoli could not be unmindful of the fate of Gaffoñi and many another Corsican patriot, and was ever on his guard against assassination. A guard was provided for him, consisting, according to one account, of twenty-four men, according to another, of eighty; most probably the latter is correct. In addition to

\* Boswell, *Tour to Corsica*.

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his official guard he had his own private one—half a dozen Corsican dogs, some in his room, others outside the door. Another, and very different ruler, the emperor Tiberius, is believed to have had a similar bodyguard; than which none more brave or faithful could be found.\*

A small paid force of regular troops was maintained to garrison particular forts, and provide guards for the magistrates. Their uniform was black, the officers wearing a little lace on the collar. They were armed with musket and bayonet, pistols and daggers being also carried. Paoli would probably have dispensed with regular troops altogether if he could, as he considered a standing army (as then constituted) opposed to Republican institutions. His idea was that the whole nation should be disciplined, thus providing an invincible militia.

The military system which Paoli found already in force provided for the levy of all men capable of bearing arms, officered by their own leaders and receiving no pay.

This system he somewhat reformed. Each village was made to furnish its own company, and each 'pieve' comprised the companies from its villages in one corps. The commanding officer of the corps and the captains of companies were appointed by the general. The whole of this militia, or such portion as he judged necessary, was at all times liable for service; but

\* Dogs. The Corsican dog is described both by Boswell (*Account of Corsica*, ch. i.) and by Gregorovius. My own impression of him is an animal rather in the nature of a large sheep dog, with a cross of the mastiff. It is, however, a distinct breed, or used to be. These dogs are supposed to be very fierce, but I did not meet that variety, perhaps on account of their masters' friendliness.



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ordinarily not more than a third would be called up, and then only for a fortnight at a time. Families, as far as possible, were kept in the same companies, so that a man usually fought in the presence of his own relations. While actually employed, these troops received pay.

Muskets, pistols, daggers and gunpowder were generally made in Corsica, but bullets were mostly brought from abroad, or taken from the Genoese. For artillery the Corsicans were dependent on what they could get from wrecked ships, or capture in war, besides a few guns purchased on the Continent.

The general found useful auxiliaries amongst the clergy. The monks were ever ready to take up arms when the country was in danger, and a Franciscan, Padre Leonardo (who was a professor at the university of Corte), preached the doctrine that a martyr's crown awaited a Corsican who died for his country. In a sincerely religious community this doctrine had a powerful effect, adding, as it did, the sanction of religion to the impulses of honour and bravery.

The parish priests also greatly helped the general to foster the patriotism and courage of the people, by carefully compiling returns of the names of all who had lost their lives in the service of their country since 1729, noting, where possible, the date and place of death.

These returns were made at Paoli's instance; their value can hardly be overestimated, as they caused every man to feel that his death in action would reflect honour, not only on himself, but upon all his kindred.

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All these various regulations and changes were gradually instituted during Pascal Paoli's long administration. There was no sudden revolution when he first took office, but the existing state of things was, from time to time, modified and improved. The general's conduct was ever marked by a tender consideration for the feelings, even for the prejudices, of the people committed to his charge; and he preferred to bring them insensibly to approve of his mode of government, rather than to enforce his views by an arbitrary exercise of power.

For instance, it was not until the session of 1764 (the session usually began in May) that it was clearly laid down what majority was required in the *consultà* to pass a proposed measure into law. A two-thirds' majority was then decided on, whilst a measure which secured half the votes recorded might again be brought forward during the same session; but a motion distinctly negatived could not again be discussed until another *consultà* had assembled, and then only with the consent of government. The *consultà* of 1764 (which we shall find later discussing important questions of foreign policy) also regulated the periods of residence of members of the supreme council, defined the qualifications for election and re-election of various officials, and provided for the government of the country in the event of a vacancy in the office of general. The latter contingency never came to pass, Paoli holding office as long as a free Corsica existed.

For a member of the supreme council the qualifications were as follows—age not less than thirty-five years, and previous exemplary service as president of a

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provincial magistracy, podestà of a large town, or some other 'respectable charge' in the public service. The podestàs of certain towns were independent of the magistrates of their provinces. For this office, and for that of president of a provincial magistracy, the age was fixed at thirty years, and some knowledge of the business to be transacted was required, besides former service in a subordinate capacity. Before re-election, all these officials were required to satisfy the Court of Syndicato of their capability and good conduct, and had also to wait two years before again undertaking the same office.

An English traveller, who visited and studied Corsica early in the present century, justly remarks that a Corsican politician 'could only serve his own private interests by consulting the general good of the nation.'\*

The income of the state (besides that portion of the tithes which fell to government by the absence of the bishops) was raised principally by a small capitation, or, rather, household tax, a revenue from the coral fishery, and a salt tax. The tithes amounted (according to Boswell) to 'about a twentieth part of every production,' by which we may suppose agricultural produce to be meant. But certain families claiming descent from the ancient caporali—*i.e.*, those of a period anterior to the foundation of the Terra del Commune—were exempt from the payment of tithes, on account of the assistance given by their ancestors to Hugo Colonna when he expelled the Saracens.†

\* Benson, *Sketches of Corsica*, sec. 2.

† The existence of Hugo Colonna was evidently believed in by the Corsicans, in spite of the 'historic doubts' of some authors. (*See* ch. i.)

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There were also cases of tithe redemption by an arrangement with the Church.

The finances of the country do not appear to have been of much importance, and the expenses of government were small. The payment of the procurators was provided for by their own constituents, and many of the offices of state seem to have been without emolument.

During the last years of Paoli's administration the population of Corsica, omitting the territory still under Genoese rule, has been estimated at about two hundred thousand ;\* and out of this number it was thought that an army of forty thousand men could be raised. This seems a too sanguine estimate of the armed strength of the nation ; possibly there was that number of men enrolled in the militia, but to keep them in arms for any length of time must have been a sheer impossibility.

The above estimate of the population was based on the number of families paying taxes to Genoa before the war broke out, but we may doubt if all the Corsican families did indeed pay taxes. For various reasons a good many people lived in remote parts of the mountain ranges, and avoided the notice of government officials. It may be of interest to mention that a century later the population of the island did not exceed a quarter of a million.

The country people often cultivated farms at some distance from their villages. Corn, vines, olives, chestnuts, timber, and the cork tree were the chief products of the soil.

The Corsican mint was established in the house of

\* Boswell. Sismondi only allows a population of one hundred and thirty thousand (*Hist. des Français*, ch. *xlvi*iii.).

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Barbaggi (who was connected by marriage with the Paoli family), and silver and copper money was struck. During the French occupation of the seaports a good deal of French money found its way to this establishment, to be converted into the national coinage.

So long ago as 1650 an attempt had been made to found a Corsican university, under the presidency of Jerome Biguglia of Bastia; but the nickname 'Dei Vagabondi' does not lead to the belief that it had any great success. General de Cursay, whose career was notable for his desire to benefit Corsica, tried to rehabilitate the Vagabonds, but after his recall to France they disappeared.\*

Paoli replaced the defunct academy with a national university at Corte, which was opened in January 1765. The professors were all Corsicans and mostly clergymen, and their zeal for teaching was at least equalled by their patriotism. In addition to the martyr's crown, promised by Father Leonardo to those who died for their country, we find Frà Filippo Bernardi declaring that whoso slew a Genoese thereby cleansed his soul from sin.

But the university taught theology, philosophy, mathematics, law, etc., besides patriotism; and its public examinations were attended by members of the government and consultà.

A public printing press made the university independent of foreign supplies of books of instruction, and the foundation of 'proper schools for children in every village' (Boswell) is a sufficient proof of the enlightenment and liberality of this small nation during its last struggles for liberty.

\* See Valery, Liv. I., ch. iv.

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Corsica, under Paoli's guidance, was showing herself a country in which freedom and law went hand in hand. Feudal oppression had been abolished, and a popular government instituted, without any violent revolution. This was not entirely due to Paoli. The customs of the old Terra del Commune gave him the outlines of a representative constitution; but he succeeded in extending this constitution to the country at large, and at the same time secured a proper respect for the law, thereby giving internal peace to the nation. This he did in spite of a constant state of war, which lasted from the time of his arrival in 1755, until, in 1769, he found himself once more an exile. But for the fact that the acquisition of Corsica seemed necessary to secure France from attack in the Mediterranean there can be little doubt that Paoli would have succeeded in making his country a free and independent state. He proved, at all events, that Corsica could at the same time fight for liberty, and show that she deserved it.

## CHAPTER XIII

### GENOA LOSES CORSICA

A.D. 1760-64. IN the year 1760 Agostino Lomellino became Doge of Genoa. He was a man of experience in foreign affairs, having previously been the Genoese minister at Paris. Well disposed towards France, he was also a patriotic citizen of Genoa. He knew that the retention of Corsica was a task of great difficulty, but felt that the attempt ought to be made, and that to sell the island would be shameful. He was therefore prepared to make great concessions, even sacrifices, to enable the republic still to hold her 'kingdom.'

The neutrality of Genoa was respected by England, and the republic had nothing to fear from that power in respect of Corsica. But the expense of holding the island, or, rather, of trying to hold it, pressed heavily on the treasury, and a voluntary tax was proposed to provide the necessary funds. The doge himself led the way with a magnificent contribution, but his example was not followed, and it was evident that no vigorous steps could be taken.



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A manifesto had been issued in May 1760 by the Corsican government, complaining of the seizure of their vessels by the Genoese, and threatening retaliation, which greatly terrified the Genoese merchants. Lomellino, who now earnestly desired peace, is said to have wished to amalgamate the two nations; he was even willing to admit eminent Corsicans into the ranks of the Genoese nobility, and to open to them the doors of the council and Senate.

This he dared not openly declare, and it was, in any case, probably too late; but he preferred conciliation to empty threats of repression, which only exposed Genoa to contempt.

At the same time France was requested not to raise false hopes in the minds of the islanders. Sorba wrote that Genoa required neither arms nor money, only a declaration that the interests of France required Corsica to remain the property of the republic. It was decided that the few places still in Genoa's power should be held, but nothing further attempted by force.

In May 1761 a very bland and alluring manifesto was issued, with the object of bringing the Corsicans to terms. It began by intimating the republic's intention of giving the Corsicans the most indubitable and authentic proofs of paternal affection, and of a sincere desire to render them tranquil and happy. An equitable administration of justice was promised, and a fostering care of Corsican trade. It was suggested that the Corsicans themselves should concur in arranging a pacification, so greatly desired by Genoa for the good of the kingdom.

The doge, counting to some extent on bribery,

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hoped for some good results from this friendly offer. Paoli was promised the title of general of the Corsican troops, and it was believed that a party in favour of Genoa might be formed. But the doge was mistaken. Paoli announced that the republic had offered peace on advantageous terms, but he left it to the consultà to decide how much confidence ought to be placed in these overtures.

This consultà\* was held at Vescovato, and it was resolved that peace should not be made, unless Genoa recognised Corsican independence as a preliminary. This done, the Corsicans were prepared to pay all debts due to the republic in the island, on condition that all fortresses should be surrendered to them. This put an end to the negotiations. Emissaries of the republic had arrived with a large sum of money to distribute in bribes, but their journey was useless, and they and their money were sent home again.

Not being able to make peace, Lomellino wished to use force to compel the Corsicans to submit; but the whole blame of the recent failure was imputed to him, and the republic was unwilling to spend more money. The French government praised the disinterested patriotism of the doge, but warned him that the useless employment of force to regain an ascendancy, already forfeited, would be nothing less than a crime.

Towards the end of 1762 a new doge took office, and an attempt was made to overthrow Paoli by

\* It has been called the Consultà of Casinca, from the name of the province of which Vescovato was the chief town.

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raising a party against him in Corsica. To this end money was sent to his old enemies, the Matras with a commission to raise troops in the name of the republic; but the money was wasted, as there were no Corsicans willing to march against their ruler under the flag of Genoa.

The general, busy both with foreign and internal affairs, about this time conceived the curious project of inviting Rousseau to become the legislator of Corsica, and a letter was written by Buttafuoco, asking him to come to the island. It was also suggested that he would more quickly acquire the confidence of the people if he would become a Roman Catholic, a proposal which seems to have given some offence. Voltaire insinuated that the whole thing was a mere practical joke; but Paoli, hearing this, wrote himself to confirm the invitation. Rousseau did not come, but, nevertheless, took great interest in Corsica, and the intervention of the French, in 1764, provoked him to the remark that 'if they heard of a free man at the other end of the world, they would go thither for the pleasure of exterminating him.'

Is it to be supposed that Paoli really expected Rousseau to come? Probably not; but it was part of his policy to arouse interest in all quarters.

This policy he had for some time been diligently carrying out. He found that England was not prepared to openly uphold an independent Corsica, in spite of the great sympathy displayed by individuals in that country; he found also that the empire was too far away, and neither Spain nor Sardinia strong enough to support him effectively; and he

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perceived that he could not entirely deliver his country from Genoa without coming to an understanding with France.

But while he used his utmost endeavours to gain French support, the republic was doing precisely the same thing. After the humiliating failure of their attempts to gain Corsica, either by negotiation, or by raising up opposition to the general amongst his own people, the Genoese were divided against themselves as to what policy to adopt. There was the party of masterly inactivity, desirous only of holding on to the seaports still in their possession, and waiting on events; there was a forward party, in favour of boldly advancing and reducing the whole country by force of arms (a manifest impossibility); and finally, a party in favour of the sale or exchange of this troublesome possession. But even this solution was difficult, and opinions divided as to how to manage it. It was proposed to cede the island to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, but this was strongly objected to, for fear of its damaging Genoese trade, to the advantage of Leghorn.

One thing was clear—unless they came to some decision quickly there would be nothing left to decide, for the Corsicans had already invested the few fortresses still held by the republic, and, without reinforcements, these places must soon fall. Paoli defeated Matra, with great loss, at Furiani, in July 1763; and the Senate, as a last resource, directed Sorba to apply to France for troops to ‘preserve, reduce and pacify the island.’\* But the French ministers at last began to consider the suggestions of their generals and other

\* ‘Conserver, réduire et pacifier l’île (Vincens).

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officers formerly connected with Corsica. It had been urged over and over again that it was useless to go on sending troops to the island and then withdrawing them without gaining any advantage. The treaty concluded at Paris in February 1763 had, in terminating the Seven Years' War, restored Minorca to England, which must have reminded French statesmen of the views held by their minister at Genoa (Campredon) before the intervention of 1738. It was therefore necessary, from their point of view, to consider together the applications made by Paoli and Sorba.

In November 1763, Choiseul, then at the head of the French government, received some private information as to the state of Corsica, which, although he seemed to take little notice of it at the time, may yet have led him to believe that Paoli was not quite in a position to answer for the policy of his country.

The facts, as related in the memoirs of the officer who made the report, are as follows:—

Dumouriez, at that time an officer on half-pay, visited Genoa in 1763 and became acquainted with the ex-doge, Lomellino. Finding that the republic was about to send five hundred men to reinforce the garrison of San Fiorenzo, which was besieged by Paoli, he applied for the command of the expedition. This command was not given him, so he decided to serve against Genoa and went to Leghorn. Thence he wrote to Paoli and offered his services, an offer which was politely declined.

Now, although no Corsican would serve under Genoa against Paoli, still the general was not without enemies; and one of them, Costa de Castellana, made



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friends with Dumouriez, who, failing employment under Paoli, was quite willing to side with the faction opposed to him. (He had, of course, no personal interest in the matter, beyond a desire to take part in whatever was going on.) Being persuaded that the opposition was powerful, Dumouriez proposed to the leaders of the party a scheme whereby they should overthrow the general and proclaim an independent republic, promising to obtain from Choiseul such indirect assistance as might be needed, if not an open recognition of independence.

Having seen the signatures of 'vingt-quatre chefs de pieves,' and been promised the command of the Republican army, Dumouriez landed at Porto Vecchio and proceeded to Sartene. Thence he went on to Bocognano to supervise the defence of the defile against Paoli's army, and gave orders for some entrenchments to be made—an order which was neglected. This 'defile' must mean the pass of Vizzavona, near Bocognano, on the road from Ajaccio to Corte. It was afterwards forced by Paoli's troops, so Dumouriez turned his attention to Bonifacio, which he failed to surprise. But he had observed the fine timber which abounds in Corsica, and advised the people to mark the best trees for felling, and to prepare a road to transport them to Porto Vecchio, assuring them that they would be able to exchange their timber for military stores and arms, as the French required it for shipbuilding.

After various adventures Dumouriez returned to France and presented a report to the Duc de Choiseul, in which he gave much information on Corsican

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affairs, and made various suggestions as to the policy to be adopted.\*

Although this report may have led Choiseul to doubt the stability of Paoli's government, still it was clear that Genoa could not long retain any power in the island ; and now (December 1763) the general made a guarded offer to submit to a French protectorate on certain conditions. But this negotiation was in secret, and Sorba's request for troops already under consideration.

In dealing with the republic, Choiseul began by objecting to the idea of using force against the Corsicans, and intimated a desire to pacify them without compulsion. Moreover, before undertaking to do anything, he demanded the surrender of at least one fortress, which was to be retained by France for ever.

This demand caused an outcry at Genoa, and seems not to have been pressed. Then the king pretended that the troops could not be spared ; he wanted to reorganise his army. But he allowed his ministers to persuade him into consenting, when his apparent hesitation had alarmed the republic sufficiently.

Now, amongst the conditions proposed by Paoli was an offer to raise two Corsican regiments, for which France was to pay an annual subsidy. An unsigned note was sent him in February 1764, in which he was informed that the regiments were not thought necessary, but that the subsidy should be granted for other purposes at some future time, when his proposals should be reconsidered. In the mean-

\* See *La Vie et Memoires du Général Dumouriez*, Liv. I., ch. iii.



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time France reserved the right to disavow all that had passed. He was also informed the French troops were about to be sent to Corsica, but with no hostile intent. The appellation of 'rebels,' to which the islanders strongly objected, was now softened into that of 'malcontents'; and the general was requested to explain matters to the nation, so that no attack should be made on the French. Paoli, in reply, expressed great regret at the loan of troops to his enemies, and hoped that full details of any treaty with Genoa would be communicated to his government.

Finally, a treaty was signed at Compiègne (August 1764), whereby France agreed to send three thousand men to Corsica, for the protection of the sea-ports;\* three of which were to be held entirely by French troops, the Genoese evacuating them, and having in them no authority whatever. The occupation was to last four years, and the French officers were to be allowed free intercourse with the Corsicans, in order that they might use their influence in restoring peace. But to Genoa was reserved the right of issuing proclamations to recall the 'malcontents' to obedience. A somewhat ironical clause confirmed to Genoa the sovereignty of the island, together with the civil and ecclesiastical administration, both of which had long since passed out of her keeping. Sorba fought hard for the omission of the clause excluding Genoese troops from the places assigned to

\* Sismondi (ch. lv.) says that France was to send seven battalions to garrison Bastia, Ajaccio, Calvi and San Fiorenzo. *Annual Register*, Vol. VII., p. 101, substitutes 'Algagliola' (Algajola) for Calvi. Seven battalions, on a peace footing, would amount to nearly three thousand men.

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France, but his efforts were fruitless, and he had to submit. With reference to this treaty, it has been stated (Boswell) that France owed money to Genoa, and sent troops as payment; but Vincens (*Hist. de Gènes*) repeatedly mentions subsidies granted by France to the republic, and, in this instance, adds that these subsidies were now discontinued. In November 1764 Paoli raised the siege of San Fiorenzo; and the French troops, under Count de Marbeuf, arrived in Corsica about the same time.

The consultà had already been assembled at Corte, in October, to consider what to do under these altered conditions; and, after three days spent in discussing the situation, the procurators had unanimously decided to appoint a 'council of war and observation' to watch over their relations with the French, who were not to be admitted into Corsican territory. The general was empowered to post guards on the frontiers, and to grant passports to French officers desiring admission; but he was to account to parliament for every passport so granted, and for any treaty he might make with the French commander. In case of new overtures from Genoa, they were to be rejected, unless, as a preliminary, the independence of Corsica was admitted. The general was instructed to represent to the King of France that his troops prevented the Corsicans from finally driving the Genoese out of the island, which they must soon have done had he not intervened. An appeal was also to be made to other powers, asking them to persuade France to refrain from intervention. Finally, it was forbidden to fell timber in the forests, without written licence from government; this last

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measure being probably required to protect the forests from the French.\*

The arrival of Marbeuf with his small army, although it prevented the expulsion of the Genoese, was by no means an unmixed evil. The French general was an enlightened and generous man, and his instructions enabled him to act in the most friendly manner towards Paoli. The latter understood well enough that he must desist from his task of driving out the ancient oppressors of his country; but they had no longer any power to do evil, while the French, provided he did not attack them, were willing to leave him in peace. The Corsicans put no obstacles in the way of movements of French troops between the places they occupied; and, appreciating the fact that they brought money into the country, the peasantry flocked to the markets established to supply the foreigners' wants.

A convention between Paoli and the French commander ensured the mutual surrender of fugitives from justice, and greatly aided the Corsican executive, as, hitherto, criminals had been able to evade punishment by escaping to any town under Genoese jurisdiction.

Genoa, hoping for a conflict between the French and Corsicans, asked for more troops. The permanent  
A.D. 1765. surrender of a fortress was demanded by France as the price of further assistance, and to this the republic would not agree, so no more came; but Marbeuf was asked to use his influence to bring the 'malcontents' to terms. He, however, was already on very good

\* Boswell gives the full text of the very interesting document recording the decisions of this consultà, signed by Chancellor Massesi. See Appendix V. of his *Account of Corsica*.

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terms with them, and carefully avoided all cause of quarrel.

When the French occupation had lasted two years, Genoa asked for its prolongation beyond the four years originally agreed upon, but offered no particular advantages in return for this additional help, so the king declared that his troops should be withdrawn at the end of the fourth year. A.D. 1766.

This declaration, whether sincere or not, convinced Genoa that her kingdom of Corsica was lost. To all but the government of the republic this fact had already been patent for some time. Paoli, in spite of the French, or perhaps with their consent, had constructed fortifications in various places; the inhabitants of towns, still nominally Genoese, sent procurators to the consultà; and, worse than all, even in Liguria itself, Corsican independence was admitted, and Genoese merchants were glad of passports from Paoli to ensure the safety of their cargoes.

Not content with practical independence, Corsica 1767. looked abroad for new adventures.

The little island of Capraja, which lies between Cap-Corse and the mainland of Italy, was in old days the property of a Corsican family (Da Mare), but had been for generations a purely Genoese possession.\*

In December 1766 Paul Mattei di Centuri or Centurini), having occasion to land at Capraja, made it his business to find out how it was defended. He found that provisions were scarce and the place

\* It is possible that the Da Mare family came originally from Genoa. The name occurs in early Genoese history.

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but carelessly guarded ; so, on his return to Corsica, he proposed to the general that the island should be annexed. Paoli consented, and sent Achilles Murati and Baptist Ristori (who both were officers in the Corsican militia) in joint command of the expedition, which was composed of two hundred of the regular troops, a body of militia from the village of Tomino, and some volunteers, with whom was Mattei, the originator of the scheme.

They started from Macinajo, in Cap-Corse, on the 16th February 1767, and landed at Capraja by night. Here they were at once joined by many of the Capraese, to whom it was explained that they came to set them free from the tyranny of Genoa. They promptly laid siege to the citadel, which was bravely defended by Bernardo Ottone, who held out until the end of May. The republic sent Pinelli, with a fleet and troops, to dislodge the invaders, but the Genoese troops were defeated and the fleet repulsed. In the end the republic had to suffer the dishonour of losing Capraja, which, for a time, became Corsican territory.

Yet another blow was in store for Genoa. The Jesuits had been expelled from France and Spain, and the republic offered them an asylum in Corsica. Choiseul then ordered Marbeuf to evacuate any place defended by France as soon as the Jesuits should enter it. The result of this order was the occupation of Ajaccio and other places by the Corsicans.

Genoa had lost her subject kingdom, and nothing now remained but to decide how best to retire with dignity.

## GENOA LOSES CORSICA

A free Corsica might be dangerous to a state now scarcely able to defend its own commerce. The only power in a position to take over the island was France; and Sorba, the negotiator who had in the past contrived to get help to keep the 'kingdom' of Corsica, was now to arrange for its transfer to a foreign power and its separation from Italy.

## CHAPTER XIV

### DESPAIR

A.D. 1767-68. PAOLI knew that the Genoese government intended to arrange for the surrender of his native country, and he accordingly tried to come to terms with the republic himself. His offer was one which might possibly have been accepted, had not Genoa been already compromised with France. Bonifacio had been Genoese for centuries, and this city Paoli offered to hold as a fief granted by the republic, and to pay a rent for it; the rest of the island was to be independent. But the Genoese took very little notice of this offer, being perhaps suspicious of the general's power to carry it out. Moreover, it was known at Genoa that Buttafuoco, who was believed to be in Paoli's confidence, was at Paris, and it was desirable to penetrate his designs before coming to a decision. An offer had been made to hand over Corsica to the King of France, to dispose of the country and nation as he pleased. Other suggestions were made, all tending to the frustration of Paoli's hopes of making



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his country independent. Sorba had a curious plan of his own, designed to disguise the actual surrender of the island. In the end we shall find his plan adopted.

In Corsica great anxiety was felt as to the intentions of the French government. Paoli had hitherto been willing to accept a French protectorate, if necessary; but now he had some hopes of support from England, where much interest was taken in his country.

While the fate of Corsica was thus in suspense Paoli adopted a strange expedient, perhaps with the view of consolidating his own authority and committing his fellow-countrymen to a definite course of action. One day, at the close of a sitting of the *consultà*, he led the procurators into a room where they saw, to their astonishment, a throne. This, he explained, was to be regarded as the visible symbol of national independence, but added that it should have no occupant until Corsica was free. His announcement was listened to in silence. If he expected to be invited to seat himself upon the throne he was disappointed, and the subject was alluded to no more.\*

In 1768 a definite offer to hand over Corsica A.D. 1768. to France was made by the republic; but the plan elaborated by Sorba was now brought to light and satisfied all parties (except the Corsicans).

\* This story seems improbable, but it is vouched for by Vincens (Bk. xii., ch. v.), Gregorovius (Bk. VII. ch. ii.), and Valery (Bk. I., ch. xl.). According to Vincens the date was 1767, and Paoli appears to have been sounding the temper of the nation, perhaps with a view to a bold defiance of France. There is also a reference to this incident in the *Annual Register* for 1768 (ch. ix.), where Paoli is made to say that the throne was to be the pedestal for a statue of Liberty.

## THE HISTORY OF CORSICA

Sorba had acquired credit and gained the confidence of influential persons in France\* (had bribed the Duchess of Grammont's maid †), and the French government let him have his own way in framing the treaty, provided only that Corsica should become French. It was arranged that Genoa should not alienate Corsica, but merely recognise the fact that to re-occupy the towns garrisoned by France at the end of the period already stipulated for would probably lead to calamitous results. The republic therefore consented to the retention of these places by France, and the occupation of any other parts of the island thought necessary for the safety of the French troops. The possession of the island was to be security for the repayment by Genoa of the money spent in the occupation. Genoa retained the right to redeem this pledge by paying the costs, and in the meantime surrendered all claim to sovereignty; but the island was not to be parted with to any third party. For ten years a payment was to be made to the republic, at the rate of two hundred thousand francs a year. To put the matter shortly, Genoa pawned Corsica for eighty thousand pounds.

A clause in the treaty provided that Genoa should never be called upon to redeem her pledge, while no limit was set to the time during which it should remain open to her to do so. It was pretended that Genoa did not lose her 'kingdom,' but only confided it to France for a time. But nothing could hide the fact that an Italian island had been sold to France.

\* Vincens, Bk. XII., ch. v.

† Dumouriez, Bk., I. ch. iii.

## DESPAIR

Sorba's treaty was signed on 15th May 1768, and at first an attempt was made to keep it secret, but the news soon reached Corsica. It was also quickly known that an army was being got ready to invade the island; and Paoli learnt, with as much surprise as indignation, that Choiseul, whilst amusing him with negotiations, had bought his country from Genoa.

In despair he assembled the consultà, and his secretary, Charles Bonaparte (the father of Napoleon), spoke out boldly in favour of resistance. The consultà decided not to surrender, and ordered a levy *en masse*. But although the greater part of the nation favoured resistance, there was a party well disposed towards France, its leader being Buttafuoco, colonel of a Corsican regiment in the French service, and formerly one of Paoli's intimate friends.

There was a short interval of suspense, and then came the last act of the tragedy.

The war began on 30th July, when Marbeuf decided to open communications between Bastia and San Fiorenzo. This was not done without considerable loss; but the French general succeeded in opening, and keeping open, the road between these two places; he also made himself master of Cap-Corse.

By the 1st September the Marquis de Chauvelin, who was to command the French troops in Corsica, had arrived at Bastia with the main body of his army. This army, according to the account given by Dumouriez,\* who was on Chauvelin's staff, consisted of sixteen battalions and two legions. But these

\* Dumouriez, Liv. I., ch. v.

## THE HISTORY OF CORSICA

units were not at war strength, and the battalions did not exceed four hundred men each, while the legions were each five hundred strong, half being mounted. Six battalions were detached to Ajaccio and Calvi, so that the actual strength of the army at Bastia was not much over five thousand, afterwards reinforced by four hundred grenadiers from the garrisons of Ajaccio and Calvi. This enumeration does not appear to include artillery, engineers, and the various departments of an army in the field. Moreover, the troops already in the island, under Marbeuf, do not seem to be taken into account, and they, according to an English contemporary authority, amounted to upwards of twelve thousand men.\* This, however, is most improbable. The treaty with Genoa, under which Marbeuf first entered the island, only provided for three thousand men being sent to garrison certain towns. Perhaps we may safely put down the entire strength of the army at Chauvelin's disposal, in September 1768, as not exceeding fifteen thousand men all told, including the various detached garrisons.

In addition to his troops, Chauvelin brought with him a host of civil functionaries, who were considered necessary for the administration of the country. This crowd of non-combatants may have swelled the numbers of his army in the eyes of contemporaries, but they were naturally of no use until the island had been conquered.

The French commander lost no time in issuing proclamations, the most important being the king's declaration, which, after explaining that Genoa had

\* *Annual Register*, Vol. XI., ch. ix.

## DESPAIR

voluntarily ceded to him her rights over the island, pointed out that he hoped to exercise his authority for the good of the people, that they should receive every indulgence if they would only submit, and, finally, that he trusted he would not be compelled to treat his new subjects as rebels. This declaration, and other similar documents, were laid before a council of the Corsican leaders at Oletta. Their reception of the king's friendly overtures was disappointing, for they simply tore the papers to pieces and announced, in unmistakable language, their intention of fighting to the bitter end.

Chauvelin thereupon moved out of Bastia. On the 3rd September he held a council of war, and it was decided to attack the Corsicans who were entrenched in the neighbourhood of Furiani. Two days later the Corsicans were forced to retreat from all their positions, except Furiani, which was held by Carlo Saliceti and Ristori, who defended the place until it was in ruins and then escaped by night.\*

After this engagement the French forces took up a position to protect Bastia and threaten the province of Nebbio. Six battalions and a legion under Marbeuf were divided between Furiani and Biguglia, whilst another brigade under Grandmaison, occupied the hills near Oletta, which he sacked, and then occupied Murato.

Chauvelin, meanwhile, had sent to France for

\* It is difficult to trace this campaign. One account gives the French twenty-six hundred men on the 5th September, as against fifteen thousand Corsicans. Another states that Furiani was held by a small garrison against fifteen thousand Frenchmen. I have endeavoured to reconcile various conflicting narratives to the best of my ability.

## THE HISTORY OF CORSICA

reinforcements, and especially for mules, his army being sadly deficient in transport.

Paoli's front was covered by the Golo, but he pushed his outposts across it, after having repelled an attempt on the part of the French to establish themselves south of this river on the 11th of September. On the 15th Clement Paoli drove Grandmaison out of Murato, obliging him to retire to Oletta, losing some guns in his retreat, besides money and baggage.

Borgo had been occupied by Colonel du Lude with five hundred men,\* besides artillery; when Grandmaison retreated from Murato this place became isolated, and was soon besieged by the Corsicans. Chauvelin manifested little alarm when he heard of the investment of Borgo, counting on Du Lude's superiority in arms, and on his possession of artillery, which the Corsicans lacked. But Du Lude, desirous of occupying a strong position, confined himself to the upper part of the village, in which there was no water; and he only held a few houses on the slope of the hill to keep open his communications with the lower portion, in which was a spring. This neglect was soon punished. Four hundred Corsicans, under Grimaldi, cut off Du Lude from his water supply, and soon after a greater number fortified the houses in the lower part of the village (6th October).

Chauvelin now attempted the relief of Borgo. Going himself with one column, Marbuef accompanying him, he sent Grandmaison with another to take the besiegers in reverse. Grandmaison was

\* Or twelve hundred, according to some accounts.

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attacked in the hills and never arrived at Borgo at all, but Chauvelin penetrated to the centre of the village, where his men were crumpled up by an invisible enemy, firing at short range from the houses. Du Lude sent out a company of grenadiers to assist Chauvelin's force; only one man of the company returned. The inhabitants of Borgo joined in the fight, and the Abbé Agostino di Silvareccio greatly distinguished himself by his courage and marksmanship. The French were obliged to retreat, leaving at least three hundred dead in the village (one account puts their loss at over eighteen hundred); and next day Du Lude surrendered with his whole force, besides having to give up the colours of the 'legion royale' and four guns.\* Chauvelin had now been engaged for over a month in the conquest of Corsica, but had scarcely gained a foot of ground, and had lost heavily both in men and material. Paoli was making a good fight of it.

On the 29th of October an attempt was made by Count de Coigni, with eight hundred men, to retake Murato. The attack failed, Coigni was killed and his men scattered.

While affairs went badly for France in the neighbourhood of Bastia, it was found that at Ajaccio there was little danger of resistance. Count de Narbonne, who had been in command there, was ordered to Calvi, where he was to await a portion of the reinforcements expected from France; there, also, it was hoped that the party hostile to Paoli might be induced to join the French.

\* *Annual Register*, 1768, says twenty guns, but this seems a large number to be sent with five hundred men.



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It seems there was some friction between the naval and military authorities, as the latter decided to equip a few small vessels of war, to be independent of the fleet, although there was already a French squadron cruising off the island.\*

But the failure of Chauvelin's operations in the field checked the course of his intrigues, and he found it necessary to condemn Narbonne to inactivity at Calvi, and to ask that the whole reinforcement (eight battalions, transport, etc.) should be sent direct to Bastia. His health had suffered during the campaign, and he soon returned to France, leaving Marbeuf in command of the army (December 1768). Chauvelin did not again undertake the conquest of Corsica.

Marbeuf determined to apply to Paoli for an armistice. In this decision he was supported by a council of war, which was attended by Narbonne, who came from Calvi for the purpose, accompanied by Dumouriez. According to the latter, these two officers alone opposed the armistice, but were out-voted, and returned to Calvi. Paoli granted the armistice, and it was found that he had, as might have been expected, treated his prisoners with every courtesy, although the French had announced that Corsicans taken in arms were to be treated as rebels. But they had not taken many, if any, so there was no great bitterness felt on this point.

The French were no further advanced than they had been when Chauvelin arrived, but had lost (at the lowest computation) not less than five hun-

\* Dumouriez, *Liv. I.*, ch. v.

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dred men killed and about seven hundred taken prisoners, and not yet exchanged. Justly has a French writer observed of the campaign of 1768, that it was 'lightly undertaken, imprudently conducted and shamefully terminated' (Dumouriez, Liv. I., ch. vi.).

The Corsicans who had joined the French were A. D. 1769. not included in the armistice arranged between Marbeuf and Paoli. This fact to some extent justifies the extraordinary conduct of Dumouriez, who, with Narbonne's approval, informed Paoli that as a French officer he would respect the armistice; but, as the Corsicans opposed to the general were not included, he would continue the war as their leader, 'en vertu des engagements personnels qu'il avait pris avec eux.\*' Accordingly he set to work to corrupt the garrison of Isola Rossa, and believed that he had succeeded.

A certain Captain Capocchia pretended to come into his plans and then prepared him a warm reception. Dumouriez, with (according to his own account) rather less than two hundred men, attacked Isola Rossa by night in January 1769. Capocchia was ready for him; instead of surrendering the fort he opened fire, and the assailants were driven off with the loss of half their strength.†

This 'petite gaillardise des corses,' as its promoter called it, gave the Corsicans a good reason for disregarding the armistice. They attacked the French in their winter quarters and captured an entire

\* Dumouriez, Liv. I., ch. v.

† According to another account they lost nearly five times their whole number.

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battalion. The country was once more in a state of war, and Marbeuf wrote to France that Dumouriez was a dangerous madman.

In spite of his successes, Paoli quite realised the difficulty of his position, and would willingly have acknowledged Louis XV. as King of Corsica, provided only that the free Corsican institutions should remain in force. But France was now determined on the annexation of the island, and would tolerate no half measures.

The general's hopes of British intervention in his favour were doomed to disappointment. England did, indeed, officially complain and protest; at some public meetings sympathy was expressed and money subscribed; from Scotland some pieces of ordnance were despatched; but nothing was done which could possibly be of any real use to the Corsicans, and, although some notice of the invasion was taken in parliament, England did no more than protest.

Paoli convened the consultà for the last time in the province of Casinca, in April 1769, and it was decided that the nation should still resist. But the outlook was bad. Capraja had been lost and the party in favour of France was increasing. This consultà was attended by Lord Pembroke, with other British, German and Italian sympathisers, and the army was increased by the enlistment of a number of foreigners.\*

\* Among other foreigners of distinction who were interested in the fate of Corsica was the Empress Catherine II. of Russia, who sent Paoli a letter purporting to come from 'the inhabitants of the North Pole.' She also sent some money. (*See Waliszewski, Romance of an Empress, trans.*) If she had sent some of the 'inhabitants of the North Pole,' as well as the money, it might have been of some use.

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The force at Marbeuf's disposal was greatly reduced by death, sickness and the loss of at least two whole battalions (at Borgo, and when the armistice was broken). Even allowing for the reinforcement of eight battalions, which had arrived in November 1768, there can hardly have been more than twelve or thirteen thousand French soldiers fit for duty in Corsica in the winter of 1768-69.

Marbeuf, however, was not inactive, and under his command the French were distinctly more successful than they had been under Chauvelin ; although he may be blamed for losing a whole battalion through too great confidence in an armistice already violated by a French officer.

In January 1769 the Corsicans made false attacks on Biguglia and Oletta. These attacks were repulsed, but served their purpose in drawing off the attention of the French. The true objective was San Fiorenzo, which was attacked by night, but the scaling-ladders were too short, so the assault failed. In February the Corsicans took Barbaggio, with five companies of French infantry in it, but they stayed too long in the neighbourhood, thereby giving Marbeuf time to cut off their retreat. A combat ensued, in which the Corsicans were defeated with heavy loss ; their leader, Colonna, being obliged to surrender with two hundred men. Still he was in a position to make terms before surrendering. It was agreed that neither he nor his followers should be sent to France. The French general politely suggested that Paoli would sustain a serious loss by the capture of Colonna, but the patriot assured him that every village in the country produced better men than

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himself, a fact of which he hoped M. de Marbeuf would soon be sensible.

In addition to holding what part of the country was already won, Marbeuf had secured twelve field-pieces and a quantity of other arms, ammunition and provisions at Orminio, not long before the affair of Barbaggio.

With so active an enemy in the field, it is little wonder if the Corsicans felt somewhat discouraged. At the consultà of April Paoli informed them that, having foreseen that there could be no harvest, he had provided for their needs, and they should lack neither arms, ammunition, money nor provisions. But he must have known that there was little hope. Enormous reinforcements were on their way, under command of Count de Vaux, a man who had served in the island before, and who bore a good reputation as a soldier. With De Vaux in command, seconded by Narbonne and Marbeuf, there was not much chance for the patriots, and they knew it, but yet were ready to try another campaign. Count de Vaux arrived in April, and with him came not only more battalions, but also twelve hundred mules for transport purposes, a most valuable reinforcement in a mountainous country with, at that time, few and bad roads. The army he commanded consisted of forty-two battalions and four legions, including those in the country before his arrival. This force, if we accept the strength of battalions and legions as given by Dumouriez, would not amount to nineteen thousand men all told. With additions for artillery and the various departments of an army, we can scarcely reckon on as many as twenty-five thousand of all ranks, out of

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which number about one thousand may have been<sup>d</sup> cavalry.\*

The new French general had, many years before, been wounded by a peasant of Sartene. This man was taken prisoner and brought before him. The Frenchman, at once generous and politic, treated him with great friendliness, and so won some personal friends to begin with. Moreover, he brought the welcome intelligence that prisoners were no longer to be treated as rebels, the barbarous orders issued at the beginning of the war having been cancelled. While thus conciliating the Corsicans, he set himself to improve the discipline of the somewhat demoralised army he found in the country. The armistice concluded by Marbeuf he most emphatically condemned, and it became clear that strong measures were about to be taken for the reduction of the whole island.

His plan was, briefly, as follows. Starting from Bastia, his main army, divided into two columns, each of twelve battalions, was to advance towards the centre of the island; one column along the valley of the Golo, the other along that in which stands Murato. These two corps would naturally meet near Ponte Nuovo (now called Ponte Leccia). Eight battalions were to proceed down the coast and then turn westward, up the valley of the Tavignano. These three columns thus all threatened Corte; whilst a fourth,

\* Compare Sismondi, *Hist. des Français*, ch. lvi., and *La Vie et Memoires du Général Dumouriez*, Liv. I., chaps. v. and vi. The *Annual Register* (1769) puts the force at over thirty thousand. Benson, *Sketches of Corsica*, sec. 11, makes it nearly forty thousand. These numbers may, from first to last, have been sent to the country, but I cannot see how more than twenty-five thousand, if as many, could ever have been available at any given time.

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under Narbonne, was to march on the same point from Ajaccio, over the Col di Vizzavona. A small force was to march right down the coast by the plain of Aleria to Porto Vecchio; whilst another, from Bonifacio, advanced on Sartene.

These operations began in May.

Paoli began by taking up a position at Murato, to check the advance of De Vaux, who came in touch with him on the 3d, and, after three days' skirmishing, forced him southward and compelled him to cross the Golo. The Corsican leader then fixed his headquarters at Morosaglia (near his birth-place), and waited for an opportunity of attacking the French in the narrow valley of the Golo. Gaffori was detached to occupy the heights of Lento, the command of another outpost being confided to Grimaldi at Canavaggia (or Canagia). Paoli doubtless hoped to defeat the French army in detail while the two northern columns were still separated, but the rapidity of their movements frustrated his plans. Grimaldi involved his general in an engagement before he was prepared for it, whilst Gaffori was surprised at Lento and failed to hold that post. Paoli's messages were intercepted by the French, and he found his plans wrecked by the junction of the two French columns north of Ponte Nuovo. Nevertheless, on the 9th, he ventured to join issue with De Vaux, although his strength was only about fifteen hundred men. As the French approached the bridge by which they were to cross the Golo, they were suddenly attacked, and three battalions driven back, with heavy loss.



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The main body came up, and the Corsicans retreated in good order; but at the bridge they were fired into by a corps composed mainly of deserters from the Genoese troops. It is uncertain whether this was done by accident or not. This corps had been posted at the bridge to hold it, and a mistake may have occurred in the confusion of the action. But the Corsicans believed that there was treachery, and this so discouraged and confused them that they were completely defeated. In their last stand they fought with the determination of despair. The dead were piled in front of the living to form a parapet, which was increased by the wounded, who dragged themselves up to add their bodies to this last rampart of freedom.

Inferior, both in arms and discipline, Corsica had held out for nearly a year against a great and warlike nation. But this was the end. The battle of Ponte Nuovo led to the fall of Corte (21st May), Isola Rossa and other important places surrendering soon after. Many of the people preferred the friendship of De Vaux to his enmity, and made terms as soon as possible.

Narbonne endeavoured to cut off Paoli's retreat, but was intercepted and, for a time, held back by Clement Paoli. The latter then joined his brother at Bastelica, together with Serpentine, Abatucci and other leaders, who were still ready to continue the struggle.

Soon their small band of a few hundreds was surrounded by thousands of the enemy, and Pascal Paoli realised that any further resistance could only bring frightful calamities upon his country,

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without hope of success. The two brothers, with between three and four hundred followers, made their way through the French lines and escaped to Porto Vecchio, where they embarked in English ships and arrived at Leghorn on the 16th of June 1769.

The French loss in the conquest of Corsica was very considerable. Over four thousand men were killed, including more than five hundred officers; and almost six thousand died from either wounds or sickness.\* The Corsican losses cannot be computed. It is well known that, in the case of irregular troops fighting in their own country, no probable estimate is possible.

After the departure of Paoli and his brother, a few patriots still held out in the mountains. Carlo Saliceti did the French so much damage that a price was put on his head. But with no central authority, no leader who could command and combine the scattered bands, their efforts were unavailing. Much suffering was endured, but gradually the nation was crushed into submission, and, after a time, had to admit that French rule was infinitely better than Genoese.

A.D. 1770. On the 15th of September 1770 a general assembly was convened at Corte. It was explained to the deputies that all offences were pardoned, and that henceforth the king would adopt and love the Corsicans as his own subjects; and the deputies, on behalf of the nation, swore allegiance to Louis XV. To Marbeuf was confided the control of

\* *Annual Register* (1769), p. 46. Benson, *Sketches of Corsica*, sec. 2. The number of officers killed seems incredible, unless it includes the non-commissioned officers as well as their superiors.

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the king's new subjects, and under his government many of the old Corsican institutions were allowed to remain in existence, respect for the law was enforced, and an attempt made to restore prosperity to the exhausted nation. But many Corsicans refused to live under French rule and emigrated, some to Tuscany, some to Minorca, some to Sardinia.

Clement Paoli entered a convent in Tuscany. Pascal Paoli retired to England, whither he was soon followed by one of the most faithful of his friends, a dog of great size, which had been his companion for years.\* This dog was brought from Leghorn in a British ship, and, let us hope, was some consolation to the exiled general.

In England Paoli was treated with great re- A.D. 1770-181  
spect, and there he remained for twenty years, returning to Corsica in 1790, to be received with high honours and granted nominal authority in the country where he had formerly been supreme. The excesses of the French Revolution disgusted him; the fury of the time was foreign to his disposition. His country had been declared a department of France,† but he could never forget its former independence under his leadership. In 1793 he was summoned before the Committee of Public Safety, but refused to attend, and was declared a traitor. The Bonapartes, sons of his former secretary, were now his enemies; Pozzo di Borgo, the lifelong foe of Napoleon, took his side and saved him from the 'Terror.'

\* *Annual Register*, 1769, p. 133.

† It was incorporated with France in 1789, and became a department in 1790, when the departmental system was instituted.

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Then came a British occupation, in 1794, supported by Paoli, but his influence was deemed injurious to the government, and he was requested (1795) to return to England, where he lived until his death, in 1807.

British rule did not please the Corsicans, who really wanted self-government, and the island was abandoned by England in October 1796, an event soon followed by its re-annexation to France. Once more, on the fall of Napoleon, British troops were seen in the island, but only to restore it to the French monarchy.

All this was a mere episode in the story of the great war resulting from the French Revolution; the history of Corsica came to an end with the battle of Ponte Nuovo. Since then the island has been French territory, but the Corsican nation still exists.

A Corsican may be an emperor, statesman, ambassador, soldier of France or any other country, but his nation claims him always, and he can neither lose his nationality nor change it.

Phœnicians, Greeks, Carthaginians, Etruscans, Romans, Vandals, Moors, Italians, Frenchmen, have held the coasts and controlled the trade of Corsica, but the nation lives on. Pride, ferocity, idleness, bigotry, all these faults have been urged against this people, but all these faults may be attributed to the centuries of suffering and oppression endured in the past. On the other hand, their courage, honesty, piety and hospitality are surely qualities which must earn our respect and

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sympathy for the Corsicans, who, although individually free under French rule, are still denied that self-government of which their past has proved them capable.

THE END



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