

in late afternoon the way which we had passed in safety before the sun had loosened ice and rock ; so we gave up the idea, and made our ascent into a col by going down to Chamouni by the ordinary route. Glissading was out of the question, for the snow was now very soft, and the Grand Plateau became a bore before we had floundered through it ; but once over the Bossons, we sped down at a great pace, and reached the comfortable Hôtel de l'Union, at 8.15 P.M., not a little pleased at having solved the problem of an ascent of Mont Blanc from the southern Miage Glacier.

CORSICA. By the Rev. W. H. HAWKER, M.A., F.Z.S. Read before the Alpine Club on May 5, 1868.

IT is not necessary for me to begin this paper with a rhapsody on the beautiful outline of Corsica, as seen from the shores of the Riviera, for the simple reason that this has been frequently done already, and for the additional reason that, from the sea shore at Mentone and Nice, the island is in reality entirely invisible, and is only seen by the medium of refraction or mirage.* It often is so seen, and still better, is bodily seen from the heights above those towns ; and it is undeniable, that dream-like in beauty is the sight often presented at early morn of the far-off island rising Venus-like out of the sea, her many snow peaks, like a diadem of pearls, catching the rising sun, and her base clothed with sleepy haze. Unless one is high above the sea level, the glimpse vouchsafed is generally short, for as the sun rises the gauzy atmosphere of the sea soon curtains it from view. From the higher mountains, however, the sharp irregular outline may be often seen clearly throughout the day until the sunset glow changes the pearl diadem for a tiara of rubies.

It was but natural that the frequent sight of this lovely vision acted with powerful attraction upon myself and some of

* The following is a simple form for ascertaining the height of a mountain whose summit is just visible to the eye at the sea level ; multiply the distance in English statute miles by itself, and two-thirds of the amount will give the required height in English feet. Thus if Monte Cinto, which is not only the highest mountain in Corsica, but the one nearest to the above-named towns, be reckoned as distant 118 miles from Mentone, then $118 \times 118 \div \frac{4}{3} =$ about 9,283 feet, which is the height the mountain should be, in order to be visible from the sea level, but in reality it is only 9,078 feet high.

my friends who were passing the winter at Mentone; the result being that, on March 14, 1866, a party of us, seven in all, including three ladies, sailed from Nice at 8 P.M. in the Valery Company's steamer *Princess Clothilde*, bound for Ajaccio.

She was a smart-looking screw-steamer, well fitted and furnished, and, moreover, very clean, but unfortunately empty: as the breeze freshened into a gale she rolled frightfully; so as the night, soon after starting, promised to be a very 'dusty' one, there was nothing for it but to admire for a short time the phosphorescence of the innumerable jelly fish alongside, and then turn in.

Steamers of this Company sail from Nice every Wednesday evening for Ajaccio and Bastia alternately, arriving at their destination about 9 or 10 A.M., and returning to Nice on the following Saturday evening from whichever port they have gone to. There is a regular service, too, between the island and Marseilles. And lastly, one can also go to or get out of the place by means of the boats, which run between Leghorn and Bastia. In approaching Corsica by this last-named route, which is generally the calmest unless there is a sirocco blowing, the sea passage is all performed by day, and is throughout beautiful, as when the mainland with the mountains of Carara and the distant Apennine range recede from view, the rocky islands Elba and Capraja, and then Pianosa and Monte Cristo claim notice until the bold outline of Corsica itself absorbs the passengers' attention.

The vessel might have been our own private yacht, the only three other first-class passengers being two Englishmen, one of whom was an acquaintance of mine, and a Belgian friend, Baron Snoy, who joined us in a second expedition to the island.

Nothing can surpass the exceeding beauty of the island when approached on the Ajaccio side in fine weather, such as we had on our second visit, when we saw it radiant with all the splendour of southern colouring. The coast line is as bold as the most indented part of the Corniche, with the additional merit of looking wild and uncultivated from the highest summit to the very water's edge. A glance at the map will give some idea of the marvellous sinuosities of the west coast, though, after all, only a general one, as there are numberless little creeks and bays the details of which cannot be indicated, but which add greatly to its picturesqueness.

The gulf of Ajaccio is a grand basin, about ten or twelve miles in diameter, open to the S.W., and entered through a

reef of small rocky islands called the Iles Sanguinaires, which run out from the northernmost point. On threading these we were immediately in calm water and skirted the northern shore, where we were much puzzled by the first apparent habitations which consisted of a number of curious-looking, diminutive houses, built very square and plain, and with tiny walled gardens round them. These are the cemeteries of different Ajaccio families. A small promontory runs out of the town of Ajaccio, on which stands the citadel, and on rounding this we found ourselves in the port, which is roomy, deep, and has a good anchorage.

We were soon surrounded by a number of shore boats, each carrying a bright tricolour, and on landing, our luggage was at once seized by an irascible and vociferating multitude of men and boys, who began carrying it in every kind of wrong direction, until they were collected by a self-elected chief and driven to the Douane.

There were three hotels, all of which we tried in turn, and found wretchedly bad. Since then a new one, the Hôtel de Londres, has been opened, which I hear is good and clean; it is therefore probably not kept by a Corsican; and as from the moment you land till the instant you leave the island, you are subjected to small intrigues of all kinds, I recommend anyone landing at Ajaccio to insist on being conducted to this hotel, and not to yield a too implicit faith to assertions that it is shut up, or burnt down, or that the landlord is dead, or that its name has been changed, all of which he is likely enough to be told by the intelligent tout of some other inn.

The lions of Ajaccio are the house where Napoleon was born, a museum, chiefly of pictures and sculptures, left by Cardinal Fesch one of the Buonapartes, and a handsome mausoleum of the same family. The town is clean and bright, the public buildings large and handsome, the principal street, the Corso, is wide, and has an avenue of tall orange trees along it; and I was surprised and charmed at the simple honesty of the street boys in sparing the ripe and abundant fruit, until I found that the trees were of the variety named after the town of Seville! Most of the women and children were employed in making cigars outside the street doors, and all the men appeared to be occupied in waiting until the cigars were made and dried, and then they smoked them—just as I have observed, at the Zoological Gardens, half-a-dozen gulls waiting patiently round one of their congeners who was in the act of laying an egg, which, upon the completion of the process, was pounced upon and devoured.

With good hotel accommodation Ajaccio would be a charming place to spend a portion of the winter in, and some comfortable villas have been built to the west of the town, in the hope of tempting English families to settle there. They are well furnished, but have not let very readily as yet. There seems to be a difficulty about water, and it might hardly be safe to remain in them late in the spring, as I heard a whisper that the malaria then reaches them.

There are many lovely walks about the place. One along the north shore of the gulf to the old Greek Chapel can scarcely be surpassed for beauty, including as it does a view of not only the gulf, but also of the amphitheatre of mountains formed partly by the main chain, and partly by a great spur of scarcely less elevation, which, starting from Monte d'Oro, the culminating point in the landscape, sweeps round the gulf to the north-west, and affords shelter from the dreaded mistral. Crosse and I walked up one day to a point about 1,200 feet above the Greek Chapel, and called Pointa Petacea, whence the view to the south is still more extensive, showing a series of headlands overlapping each other, and Sardinia rising boldly in the far distance beyond the last promontory.

As, however, we had no intention of remaining an indefinite time at Ajaccio, we set about discovering what means of locomotion exist for exploring the island: the following is the result. A diligence runs regularly from Ajaccio along the coast by Sartene to Bonifaccio, the southernmost point of Corsica, thence by Porto Vecchio and Solenzara to Bastia; thus making a circuit of more than half the coast line of the island. Another diligence starts in the opposite direction, and runs in a north direction along the coast from Ajaccio to Vico. A third goes obliquely in a north-east direction right through the island by a splendid road made by Napoleon through Bocognano, Viggio, and Corte to Bastia.

The first of these routes tempted our fellow-passengers; they accordingly started for the south, intent on sketching and shooting. But one great object of our visit to the island was to see as much as we could of the renowned pine forests, for which Corsica has been famous from the earliest times, and which lie in the northern district. Theophrastus tells of a large ship built by the Romans with this timber, and we read that Sextus Pompeius having seized the island, drew from its forests the means of maintaining his naval supremacy. Even since its annexation to France, some of the finest masts in the French navy have been obtained from the Forest of Vizzavona. But that 'wooden walls' have ceased to be, and even masts are

made of iron, one might be tempted to regret that administrative stupidity in which we are unrivalled, and which muddled the business when the island attached herself spontaneously to the English Crown: but there was a job to be done, an ever-recurring Elliott to be promoted; so he was made viceroy, and a very short spell of well-intentioned mismanagement lost all Corsica, with her splendid forests, her commanding position in the Mediterranean, and her fine harbours, to the English Crown for ever.

These forests are of Pine trees, principally of two species, *Pinus maritima*, generally called pinaster, which is chiefly useful as yielding great quantities of turpentine, but whose wood is not durable; and the famous Corsican pine, which supplies some of the most valuable timber in Europe. It is wonderful what mistakes are made by people about this tree. Dr. Bennet, the resident physician of the Pension Anglaise at Mentone, has published an account of an expedition he made to the island, and in a glowing description of the forests says: 'Above the range of the chestnut tree we meet with the *Pinus maritima*, and above that, along with it in some regions, the *Pinus larix*, or larch. This tree is a native of Corsica, and in no part of Europe does it grow to greater luxuriance and perfection. . . . Above the pines come the beech, then the birch, and then—the eternal snows!' Now all this is very grand, but it is altogether incorrect.

The error, which several writers have copied from each other, seems to arise either from an ignorance of French, or from an imperfect knowledge of the subject. The fact is, there are two trees whose scientific names are:—

1. *Pinus larix*, which we call larch, and the French *mélèse*, or rarely *larix*.
2. *Pinus laricio*, which we call Corsican pine, and the French *Pin larice*.

No one who has ever seen the Corsican pine could possibly mistake it for a larch, as the tree is an evergreen, and resembles a Scotch fir, and moreover, I do not believe that there is a single specimen of a larch in the island.

Well, we had heard of the fame of these Corsican pine forests, and we wished to see something of them. This desire was soon increased, for in one of our walks along the harbour of Ajaccio we saw some fine baulks of the timber which had been brought down by mules from the interior, and were remarking that they must have been supplied by good large trees, when, to our amazement, we found that many of them were only *quarters* of trees. Our reverence for *P. laricio* was greatly augmented, so

was also the desire to see that monarch of European trees in a living state. We luckily stumbled upon the proprietor of the forests whence these trees came, Monsieur Folacci, and he subsequently proved exceedingly kind and useful to us.

Talking of large trees, there was close by, in an avenue of trees, which runs along the harbour, one which attracted my attention from its size and age and untrimmed look. It was an extraordinarily large specimen of *Celtis Australis*—no less than 11 feet $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in circumference: it was the oldest tree in the avenue, and on it, in the days of the Revolution, they used to hang the royalists. It is a weird old tree, with gnarled trunk and stumpy, wicked, gallows-looking boughs; it has long been hollow, and the middle has been filled up with masonry to support it, which gives it a stony-hearted look, quite in keeping with its disreputable history.

The day before starting for the forests we took a preliminary afternoon drive of 5 miles over the small range of conical hills which protect Ajaccio from the N.E. and E., to the sulphur baths of Caldaniccia, a wretched building with a few baths attached to it, much frequented in summer by the *élite* of Ajaccio, but no one dare stop there after sunset, on account of the malaria, so it has never been worth while to build a good establishment. It is situated in the plain called Campo d'Oro or Campo del Oro, through which runs the river Gravone, which, rising at the foot of Monte d'Oro, flows into the harbour of Ajaccio.

I mention this drive because it gave us our first bandit story; we afterwards heard them at every turn and I do not remember half of them, but as this one is illustrative of the Corsican character I may as well give it.

It seems that at the last civic election, a few months before, at a village called Alata, one of the natives who had settled at Ajaccio and become a well-to-do hatter, returned and meddled with 'la politique.' This led to his having some words in the town hall with the Maire, into whose shoes he was probably anxious to step. The argument becoming warm, the worthy hatter speedily produces a pistol, takes a shot at the Maire, and decamps. After playing hide and seek for some time, the gendarmes tracked him into a house, which was pointed out to us, and surrounded it. The officer, who happened to be one of his personal friends, called to him to surrender quietly, saying that as, fortunately, the Maire was only wounded, he would probably have but a short imprisonment. The man appeared armed at a window, in some melodramatic phrase said he preferred a glorious death as a bandit to the dishonour of a

prison, and on his friend the officer advancing he shot him dead. Of course he was instantly riddled with the bullets of the gendarmes; and both bodies were carried back to Ajaccio, where honest people mourned the loss of a brave and intrepid officer, while the amiable Corsicans added another to the list of savage brutes whom they dignify with the rank of national heroes.

And now, before we start for the mountains, I must give, in as few words as I can, some idea of the geography of Corsica.

The structure of the island, whose length is 124 miles and its greatest breadth 52 miles, is altogether mountainous, and a glance at the map will show that there is a considerable simplicity in the general arrangement of the mountains.

In the first place, we have a main chain, which is the backbone of the island, running from top to bottom of it, and culminating at about the centre, where it has received a great twist, but, notwithstanding this, it is never absolutely broken, inasmuch as all the cols and passes across it are very high, the only carriage road over it being by the Col de Vizzavona, nearly 4,000 feet above the sea.

This main chain then takes three principal directions. Commencing in the N. at the promontory of Capo Corso, where the mountains rise to over 5,000 feet, it soon takes a S. W. direction until it reaches Monte Cinto, which has lately been discovered by the French engineers to be the highest mountain in the island. Just after Monte Cinto it takes the sudden twist I have mentioned, the direction being from N. W. to S. E. until we reach Monte Renoso, after which it runs pretty straight from N. to S., the last high mountain to the south being Monte Incudine (6,768 feet).*

The district which forms the nucleus of the system, is a very elevated tract of country,—an alpine and forest region combined. Here are the highest mountains and the largest forests, the former consisting of Monte Cinto (9,078 ft.) just mentioned; Paglia Orba (8,700 ft.), once considered the highest, and certainly by far the most remarkable peak in the island; shaped like a huge shark's tooth, its magnificent precipice is conspicuous with the naked eye from above Mentone, and always excited our utmost admiration; it divides the forest of Aitone from that of Valdoniello: Artica (7,921 ft.), dividing the forest of Melo from that of Valdoniello; Monte Rotondo (9,068 ft.), the most massive, and Monte d'Oro (8,704 ft.), the most beautiful of all.

* These heights, excepting Monte Cinto, are according to Marmocchi, the new Ordnance measurements not being yet published.

This region, which is very wild and picturesque, has been not inaptly called the Switzerland of Corsica, and to it, on both visits, our attention was principally directed.

To complete my rough description of the geography of the island, as far as is necessary for our purpose, I must add the noticeable feature, that, as a rule, the chief spurs of the main chain—and they are many and great—are thrown out on the western side, each of them forming at its extremity a bold and lofty promontory, washed by the Mediterranean. These successive ridges inclose beautiful and fertile valleys, with deep gulfs and bays running inland. The reason of this is, that the spurs are, like the main chain, all of primitive rocks, including some of the most beautiful granites known.

The eastern side of the island, on the other hand, presents minor ranges of calcareous formation, which, by more rapid disintegration, have formed considerable plains, through which the rivers, finding a slow and sluggish outfall, have created on their way marshes and lagoons of great extent, renowned for eels, wild-fowl, and malaria.

And now behold us starting forth on our adventures, in a couple of small open vehicles, drawn respectively by two mules and two ponies.

The road to Vico, our first sleeping-place, does not call for much remark. Like all the west coast, when the road was not rising in order to surmount one or other of the spurs I have mentioned, it was descending it on the other side, only to mount again as soon as the narrow valley or plain had been traversed. The views up these valleys were always very fine, as the eye ran up to the main range.

On the first long ascent we had to make, we in the first carriage had a curious and marvellous escape, for, as we were passing beneath a quarry of very beautiful red granite, from which had been hewn the pedestal for the recently erected monument to Napoleon in the Place at Ajaccio, I happened to see, high over our heads, an immense boulder detach itself, and start bounding down directly in front of us. I shouted to the driver to stop, which he seemed in no hurry to do, until, guided by my gestures, he looked up, and saw the mass of rock coming straight at us. He then did utter a dismal howl at his horses, which made them give so frantic a start forward, that crack went all the traces. When the rock was a dozen yards from us, at the end of a bound of about 150 feet, it most fortunately struck against another boulder, which checked its velocity; and, getting another check at the side of the road, it came to a halt between the fore and hind wheels of our

carriage: one roll more, and it would have completely crushed us.

On our way we passed a great extent of real wild untouched Macchia, or Macquis, a thick tangled brushwood of all kinds of prickly shrubs, mingled with *Laurustinus*, myrtle, wild olive, and *Phyllirhæa*: the edge was gay with *Cyclamen repandum*.

This macchia covers a great portion of the island, and is where the bandits generally hide. Often they will be within a few feet of the main road, taking care not to make any track into the road itself, and their friends knowing the spot, as they pass along, throw them over provisions.

At Vico we halted at the inn (Pozzo di Borgo), where the diligence stops, and found a hearty English-looking landlord, who bustled about, and, with his wife and daughters, did his best to make us comfortable.

There is hardly a place one comes to in one's wanderings, where one does not find a specimen of the variety 'bore' of the human species. Even Vico was not, by its remoteness, exempt from the nuisance, for, on emerging next morning from the inn, I was pounced upon by a garrulous old individual, full of ignorant conceit, who, seeing my vasculum, insisted that I was a medical herborist, and harangued me upon the useful and nourishing properties of several plants which I knew to be virulent poisons. I conclude the old gentleman's practice had ceased to be extensive, as he must soon have outlived his patients. It required some contrivance to shake off my pedantic friend without giving him offence; clear of him, we were accosted by another man, who told us, with much mystery, that he could show us a mine of antimony. He had spied an ice axe among the luggage, and concluded we were prospecting for minerals.

From Vico, where we stayed a couple of nights, we made an afternoon expedition to the baths of Guagno, where there is a large establishment, much frequented in summer by the French residents in Corsica. It was a dreary, dismal-looking place, giving one the general idea of a decayed house of correction, that had been bought cheap, and wanted many repairs and much whitewash.

From here a pass leads over the main chain by the Bocca della Scoglia to Corte: the chief interest of this pass is on the other side, and I shall mention it again when we get there.

Starting at 8 A.M. next morning, we drove in about three and a half hours from Vico to Evisa. The drive took us over a high barren tract, with occasional clumps of magnificent *Ilex*, and crossing another great spur by the Col de Sevi (nearly

3,800 feet), led us into the first chestnut district we had yet seen. We passed through the village of Cristaniccia, where the people are said never to taste bread, but to live almost entirely on chestnuts. The children looked sickly and starved, and the mothers pale, and the whole place had a poverty-stricken air of utter misery.

Evisa stands at the head of a magnificent gorge of red granite cliffs, which runs down to the little marina or gulf of Porto, whence it gets its supplies by sea. The descent of about 2,900 feet to the sea is very steep, and the gorge narrow, and we set out to explore it, but were driven back by a thunder-storm.

We found here a small new inn, with a bragging landlord, who tried to cheat us. Several morose-looking women were hovering about the place, wearing the peculiar Corsican costume, which is singularly unlike that worn on the stage, when Corsican brothers give the British public an insight into the manners and customs of that romantic island. The usual costume, which is of great antiquity, consists of a cloth, generally black, and called the 'mandile,' which covers the forehead, and is wound round the back hair, so that all the hair is concealed; besides this, they wear a long black garment called a 'faldetta,' the hinder end of which is brought over the head, and gives it a nun-like look to the wearer.

The resources of the inn in the way of edibles were limited to a few potatoes and a sheep's head, and as, on our arrival, they turned us all into the kitchen, we improved the occasion by preparing our own dinner with preserved soup and vegetables, throwing in the sheep's head for stock. Not till dinner was nearly ready did they let us go up-stairs to a decent salon.

Crosse and I soon learnt from one of our men, that this delay was caused by the fact that a 'vocero' was taking place in the house on our arrival. Now a vocero, being an exclusively Corsican custom, is worth mentioning: it is that when a man dies, the relations, and all the women in the place, gather together in a room; they then put him on the table, and one by one the women sing improvised dirges, called voceros, round the corpse. If he has distinguished himself at all in the vendetta line, he has deserved well of his family, and he now gets full credit and glory for his meritorious deeds. If he ever, or his father or grandfather before him, received any affront which has not been thoroughly squared off, now is the time to remember it. Old sores are never forgotten in Corsica, nor forgiven; and now is the time to rip them up, and excite with taunts any male representative of the dead man to revenge.

It appeared that we had interrupted a festive and peaceful gathering of this nature, and as it would never do for the house to lose the custom which our caravan suggested, the proceedings were suspended until our departure on the morrow. But what were they to do with the gentleman upstairs? Our company commanded the door, staircase, passage, and every outlet, and as it would certainly have scared some, if not all of us, to see a dead body carried out of the *salle-à-manger*, it was necessary to stow him away somewhere *pro tem*. It must have given them some trouble, but we understood that they contrived to bundle him up, and stuff him into a cupboard, in front of which Crosse and I took care to sit during dinner, though not without mortal dread, suggested by sundry ominous creaks behind us, that the fastenings might give way, and the corpse come rolling out into the middle of the party.

Next morning we had hard work to get off. The mules had to come up from Porto: nobody ever hurries in Corsica; to-morrow would have suited them quite as well as to-day, or rather better, for they would have been paid a day for doing nothing: the poor man in the cupboard had been smuggled out during the night, so there was nothing to make our departure desirable to them. Such a thing as a side-saddle does not exist in the whole island, for the women of every degree ride '*en cavalier*;' consequently pack-saddles had to be arranged, with cloaks and impromptu stirrups, for the ladies. We were amongst true Corsicans here, who, as proud of their blood as Spaniards, consider it *infra dig.* to work, and left us to do most of the packing ourselves. Surprised at the number of mules brought, we found that some of the men meant themselves to ride, and an extra mule or two had to carry chestnuts for the rest to eat.

At length, after a wrangle with the landlord, who charged us at the rate of Willis' Rooms for our dinner off the sheep's head, we managed to get away in detachments. I stayed to see the luggage on its way, and not having quite recovered from a slip on some rocks at Mentone, had to ride. My mule, finding itself last, set off at a gallop to overtake the rest, and my vasculum rattling on my back, frightened the animal so, that it became unmanageable, especially as it had only a halter on, which I dared not pull, as it would have guided it down a ravine to our mutual extermination. It needed no guiding, however, for the creature evinced a fiendish propensity to go over the side, when at a critical moment I fortunately contrived to hit the brute hard in the left eye, which drove it into a quarry on the opposite side, where we finally both got bogged. It was wonderful how soon my leg got well after that!

The weather was dull and threatening when we started, and as we entered the famous forest of Aitone it began to rain; this soon turned to snow, which we found many feet deep at the top of the pass, where of course all riding was impossible, and it was a matter of some difficulty to get the mules over at all. The trees at first were chiefly a young growth of maritime, and then of Corsican pine: but by degrees we got glimpses of larger trees of *laricio*, which, from having been injured or become decayed, were not thought worth cutting: they looked, however, very grand, looming through the heavy snow storm.

The pass is the Col de Vergio (5,026 ft.), on the main chain between Capo alla Rufa on the south, and Capo alla Cuculla on the north, and leads into the district of the Niolo, passing close by the source of the river Golo.

We rested for lunch at the wooden barrack of the people employed in collecting turpentine, and cutting the timber of the forest of Valdoniello, and not till long after dark did we reach Calacuccia, wet, weary, and hungry, only to find nothing to eat but a few eggs, and the accommodation filthy and insufficient. But for the good-nature of the gendarmes, who gave some of us beds at their barracks, we should have had a dismal time of it; even as it was, existence did not present many extenuating circumstances that day.

In fine weather the passage of this col from Evisa must afford some of the grandest scenery in the island, and the next morning being perfectly clear we were rewarded by a view of great interest and beauty, comprising, in the amphitheatre of mountains which surrounded us, many of the peaks visible from the Corniche. Temptingly close to Calacuccia rose the grand mass of Monte Cinto, rendered inaccessible by the fresh snow, and near it the most extraordinary collection of peaks imaginable, rising up to the number of five like the fingers of a gigantic hand. These are the 'Cinque Frati,' or 'Cinque Gabi.' The snow reached down almost to our level, which I suppose is about 2,500 feet above the sea, and, had we waited till to-day, we should have found the Col de Vergio impassable.

Not long after leaving Calacuccia we entered the gorge of the Golo, a very fine bit of savage rock scenery, the path in many places being simply a staircase hewn out of the steep face of the cliffs. On reaching its débouchure into the main valley below we crossed the river to its right bank, ascended to the village of Castirla, and had to rise to a considerable height in order to cross by the Col San Quilico (1,820 ft.), the watershed between the rivers Golo and Tavignano. Once over it, we soon reached Corte (1,340 ft.).

The town of Corte is picturesque in the highest degree, especially from the entrance to the valley of the Rostonica. And it is by far the best place in the island to make one's headquarters, being within easy reach of the highest mountains and the most beautiful scenery. The next day we explored it, and having made the acquaintance of the French Commandant, he took us over the famous citadel. Here a large number of Arab prisoners are quartered; most of them are the chiefs or the renowned warriors of their respective tribes, and are kept as political hostages by the French Government, to insure the good conduct of their relations in Algeria. Not being common criminals, and it being utterly impossible for them to escape, they are allowed a good deal of freedom, especially under the kind-hearted Commandant M. de Saussol, who, having served long in Algeria, understands how to manage them. Many of them were remarkably fine, handsome men, and their swarthy faces and white bournouses, as they stalked about the town, looking down with calm contempt upon the irascible Corsicans, whom they term 'Les Kabyles de la France,' added an unusual element of picturesqueness to the place.

We were here rejoined by our fellow travellers in the steamer, who had made the southern circuit of the island. They had met with very indifferent success in the sporting line although they had joined one or two battues, but were charmed with the scenery of the coast from Ajaccio to Bonifaccio, and had of course, like us, heard plenty of vendetta stories. One of them is perhaps worth telling. A girl had been involved in a love affair with a man who at last married her. After living some time together he deserted her and her baby, but was induced by the threats of her family to return, and the same night he murdered the mother and child in a very barbarous manner, and took to the macquis. The brother, as her next friend, assisted by the gendarmes, made a long search for him. Had they discovered the murderer, the avenger would, by an excellent custom, which satisfies the national sense of honour, and at the same time furthers the ends of justice, have been allowed to have the first shot at his enemy. He was some months absent, and returned unsuccessful, and worn out with the hardships he had undergone. This was, however, the reverse of a satisfactory conclusion for the family of the murdered girl, who could by no means speak with their enemy in the gate as long as the stain remained unavenged. In vain the brother urged that he had done his utmost, during his long absence, to find the man, and should he ever turn up he would of course settle accounts with him. 'That is true,' said the amiable relatives, 'but if

you cannot find the man himself, you are bound to take his nearest relations instead,—there are his two brothers.’ ‘His brothers, indeed,’ pleaded the man, ‘Why! they are my friends and companions.’ ‘What does that matter,’ was the retort, ‘when it is a case of vendetta?’ In this way the entire family led the wretched man the life of a dog. It is true that this exciting to murder by nagging and taunts, which is called giving a man the ‘rimbecco,’ is in reality a punishable offence; but who could prosecute his whole family for henpecking and biting their thumbs at him? At length, one day the man took his double-barrelled gun, found the two brothers of his sister’s murderer digging potatoes close by, and killing them both with a right and left, walked straight to the gendarmerie and gave himself up. He was sentenced to a short imprisonment, which was now at an end, had returned to the bosom of his adoring family, and was pointed out to our friends, taking an active part in the battue.

(To be continued.)

ALPINE LAKES, AND THE GLACIER EROSION THEORY.—Sir Roderick Murchison has written to the Editor of the *Alpine Journal*, expressing some dissatisfaction that the writer of the Review of Favre’s *Recherches Géologiques*, which appeared in the *Journal* for August last, had not included his name among the opponents of the theory ‘that glaciers had ever ‘scooped out the cavities now occupied by lakes;’ and has forwarded to us a copy of a review of the same work, written by himself, and published in the *Geological Magazine* for April 1868. Our reviewer regrets that he had not the advantage of perusing this paper before the publication of his own, which, though it did not appear till August, was written some months before, or he would otherwise have been glad to fortify, by an additional authority, of such weight as Sir Roderick’s, the view for which he was able to adduce that of Lyell, Studer, Ball, Omboni, and Favre.

REVIEW.

BALL’S ALPINE GUIDE.*

Reviewing a guide-book is notoriously one of the most difficult tasks which can be imposed on any critic. The compiler is *ex hypothesi* specially well acquainted with the country he professes to describe, so that his reviewer need be almost competent to write the guide-book himself before he can detect many errors or omissions, defects of fact

* *The Alpine Guide*. By John Ball, M.R.S.A., F.L.S., &c., late President of the Alpine Club. Part I. The Western Alps. 2nd edition. 1866. Part II. The Central Alps. 2nd edition. 1866. Part III. The Eastern Alps. 1868. London: Longmans & Co.