

Mansfield Milburg Francisco

**Castles and Chateaux of
Old Navarre and the
Basque Provinces**



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Francis Miltoun

Castles and Chateaux of Old Navarre and the Basque Provinces

By Way of Introduction

“Cecy est un livre de bonne foy.”

Montaigne.

No account of the life and historical monuments of any section of the old French provinces can be made to confine its scope within geographical or topographical limits. The most that can be accomplished is to centre the interest around some imaginary hub from which radiate leading lines of historic and romantic interest.

Henri de Navarre is the chief romantic and historical figure of all that part of France bounded on the south by the Pyrenean frontier of Spain. He was but a Prince of Béarn when his mother, Jeanne d’Albret, became the sovereign of French Navarre and of Béarn, but the romantic life which had centred around the ancestral château at Pau was such that the young prince went up to Paris with a training in chivalry and a love of pomp and splendour which was second only to that of François I. The little kingdom of Navarre, the principality of Béarn, and the dukedoms and countships which surround them, from the Mediterranean on the east to the Gulf of Gascony on the west, are so intimately connected with the gallant doings of men and women of those old days that the region known as the Pyrenean provinces of the later monarchy of France stands in a class by itself with regard to the romance and chivalry of feudal days.

The dukes, counts and seigneurs of Languedoc and Gascony have been names to conjure with for the novelists of the Dumas school; and, too, the manners and customs of the earlier troubadours and crusaders formed a motive for still another coterie of fictionists of the romantic school. In the Comté de Foix one finds a link which binds the noblesse of the south with that of the north. It is the story of Françoise de Foix, who became the Marquise de Chateaubriant, the wife of Jean de Laval, that Breton Bluebeard whose atrocities were almost as great as those of his brother of the fairy tale. And the ties are numerous which have joined the chatelains of these feudal châteaux and courts of the Midi with those of the Domain of France.

These petty countships, dukedoms and kingdoms of the Pyrenees were absorbed into France in 1789, and to-day their nomenclature has disappeared from the geographies; but the habitant of the Basses Pyrénées, the Pyrénées Orientales, and the Hautes Pyrénées keeps the historical distinctions of the past as clearly defined in his own mind as if he were living in feudal times. The Béarnais refers contemptuously to the men of Roussillon as Catalans, and to the Basques as a wild, weird kind of a being, neither French nor Spanish.

The geographical limits covered by the actual journeyings outlined in the following pages skirt the French slopes of the Pyrenees from the Atlantic Gulf of Gascony to the Mediterranean Gulf of Lyons, and so on to the mouths of the Rhône, where they join another series of recorded rambles, conceived and already evolved into a book by the same author and artist.¹ The whole itinerary has been carefully thought out and minutely covered in many journeyings by road and rail, crossing and recrossing from east to west and from west to east that delectable land commonly known to the Parisian Frenchman as the Midi.

¹ “Castles and Châteaux of Old Touraine and the Loire Country.”

The contrasts with which one meets in going between the extreme boundaries of east and west are very great, both with respect to men and to manners; the Niçois is no brother of the Basque, though they both be swarthy and speak a *patois*, even to-day as unlike modern French as is the speech of the Breton or the Flamand. The Catalan of Roussillon is quite unlike the Languedoçian of the Camargue plain, and the peasant of the Aude or the Ariège bears little or no resemblance in speech or manners to the Béarnais.

There is a subtle charm and appeal in the magnificent feudal châteaux and fortified bourgs of this region which is quite different from the warmer emotions awakened by the great Renaissance masterpieces of Touraine and the Loire country. Each is irresistible. Whether one contemplates the imposing château at Pau, or the more delicately conceived Chenonceaux; the old walled Cité of Carcassonne, or the walls and ramparts of Clisson or of Angers; the Roman arena at Nîmes, or the Roman Arc de Triomphe at Saintes, there is equal charm and contrast.

To the greater appreciation, then, of the people of Southern France, and of the gallant types of the Pyrenean provinces in particular, the following pages have been written and illustrated.

F. M.

Perpignan, *August*, 1907.

CHAPTER I

A GENERAL SURVEY

THIS book is no record of exploitation or discovery; it is simply a review of many things seen and heard anent that marvellous and comparatively little known region vaguely described as “the Pyrenees,” of which the old French provinces (and before them the independent kingdoms, countships and dukedoms) of Béarn, Navarre, Foix and Roussillon are the chief and most familiar.

The region has been known as a touring ground for long years, and mountain climbers who have tired of the monotony of the Alps have found much here to quicken their jaded appetites. Besides this, there is a wealth of historic fact and a quaintness of men and manners throughout all this wonderful country of infinite variety, which has been little worked, as yet, by any but the guide-book makers, who deal with only the driest of details and with little approach to completeness.

The monuments of the region, the historic and ecclesiastical shrines, are numerous enough to warrant a very extended review, but they have only been hinted at once and again by travellers who have usually made the round of the resorts like Biarritz, Pau, Luchon and Lourdes their chief reason for coming here at all.

Delightful as are these places, and a half a dozen others whose names are less familiar, the little known townlets with their historic sites – such as Mazères, with its Château de Henri Quatre, Navarreux, Mauléon, Morlaas, Nay, and Bruges (peopled originally by *Flamands*) – make up an itinerary quite as important as one composed of the names of places writ large in the guide-books and in black type on the railway-maps.

The region of the Pyrenees is most accessible, granted it is off the regular beaten travel track. The tide of Mediterranean travel is breaking hard upon its shores to-day; but few who are washed ashore by it go inland from Barcelona and Perpignan, and so on to the old-time little kingdoms of the Pyrenees. Fewer still among those who go to southern France, via Marseilles, ever think of turning westward instead of eastward – the attraction of Monte Carlo and its satellite resorts is too great. The same is true of those about to “do” the Spanish tour, which usually means Holy Week at Seville, a day in the Prado and another at the Alhambra and Grenada, Toledo of course, and back again north to Paris, or to take ship at Gibraltar. En route they may have stopped at Biarritz, in France, or San Sebastian, in Spain, because it is the vogue just at present, but that is all.

It was thus that we had known “the Pyrenees.” We knew Pau and its ancestral château of Henri Quatre; had had a look at Biarritz; had been to Lourdes, Luchon and Tarbes and even to Cauterets and Bigorre, and to Foix, Carcassonne and Toulouse, but those were reminiscences of days of railway travel. Since that time the automobile has come to make travel in out-of-the-way places easy, and instead of having to bargain for a sorry hack to take us through the Gorges de Pierre Lys, or from Perpignan to Prats-de-Mollo we found an even greater pleasure in finding our own way and setting our own pace.

This is the way to best know a country not one’s own, and whether we were contemplating the spot where Charlemagne and his followers met defeat at the hands of the Mountaineers, or stood where the Romans erected their great *trophée*, high above Bellegarde, we were sure that we were always on the trail we would follow, and were not being driven hither and thither by a *cocher* who classed all strangers as “mere tourists,” and pointed out a cavern with gigantic stalagmites or a profile rock as being the “chief sights” of his neighbourhood, when near by may have been a famous battle-ground or the château where was born the gallant Gaston Phœbus. Really, tourists, using the word in its over-worked sense, are themselves responsible for much that is banal in the way of sights; they won’t follow out their own predilections, but walk blindly in the trail of others whose tastes may not be their own.

Travel by road, by diligence or omnibus, is more frequent all through the French departments bordering on the Pyrenees than in any other part of France, save perhaps in Dauphiné and Savoie, and the linking up of various loose ends of railway by such a means is one of the delights of travel in these parts – if you don't happen to have an automobile handy.

Beyond a mere appreciation of mediæval architectural delights of *châteaux*, *manoirs*, and *gentilhommières* of the region, this book includes some comments on the manner of living in those far-away times when chivalry flourished on this classically romantic ground. It treats, too, somewhat of men and manners of to-day, for here in this southwest corner of France much of modern life is but a reminiscence of that which has gone before.

Many of the great spas of to-day, such as the Bagnères de Bigorre, Salies de Béarn, Cauterets, Eaux-Bonnes, or Amélie les Bains, have a historic past, as well as a present vogue. They were known in some cases to the Romans, and were often frequented by the royalties of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and therein is another link which binds the present with the past.

One feature of the region resulting from the alliance of the life of the princes, counts and seigneurs of the romantic past, with that of the monks and prelates of those times is the religious architecture.

Since the overlord or seigneur of a small district was often an amply endowed archbishop or bishop, or the lands round about belonged by ancient right to some community of monkish brethren, it is but natural that mention of some of their more notable works and institutions should have found a place herein. Where such inclusion is made, it is always with the consideration of the part played in the stirring affairs of mediæval times by some fat monk or courtly prelate, who was, if not a compeer, at least a companion of the lay lords and seigneurs.

Not all the fascinating figures of history have been princes and counts; sometimes they were cardinal-archbishops, and when they were wealthy and powerful seigneurs as well they became at once principal characters on the stage. Often they have been as romantic and chivalrous (and as intriguing and as greedy) as the most dashing hero who ever wore cloak and doublet.

Still another species of historical characters and monuments is found plentifully besprinkled through the pages of the chronicles of the Pyrenean kingdoms and provinces, and that is the class which includes warriors and their fortresses.

A castle may well be legitimately considered as a fortress, and a château as a country house; the two are quite distinct one from the other, though often their functions have been combined.

Throughout the Pyrenees are many little walled towns, fortifications, watch-towers and what not, architecturally as splendid, and as great, as the most glorious domestic establishment of Renaissance days. The *cité* of Carcassonne, more especially, is one of these. Carcassonne's château is as naught considered without the ramparts of the mediæval *cité*, but together, what a splendid historical souvenir they form! The most splendid, indeed, that still exists in Europe, or perhaps that ever did exist.

Prats-de-Mollo and its walls, its tower, and the defending Fort Bellegarde; Saint Bertrand de Comminges and its walls; or even the quaintly picturesque defences of Vauban at Bayonne, where one enters the city to-day through various gateway breaches in the walls, are all as reminiscent of the vivid life of the history-making past, as is Henri Quatre's tortoise-shell cradle at Pau, or Gaston de Foix' ancestral château at Mazères.

Mostly it is the old order of things with which one comes into contact here, but the blend of the new and old is sometimes astonishing. Luchon and Pau and Tarbes and Lourdes, and many other places for that matter, have over-progressed. This has been remarked before now; the writer is not alone in his opinion.

The equal of the charm of the Pyrenean country, its historic sites, its quaint peoples, and its scenic splendours does not exist in all France. It is a blend of French and Spanish manners and blood, lending a colour-scheme to life that is most enjoyable to the seeker after new delights.

Before the Revolution, France was divided into fifty-two provinces, made up wholly from the petty states of feudal times. Of the southern provinces, seven in all, this book deals in part with Gascogne (capital Auch), the Comté de Foix (capital Foix), Roussillon (capital Perpignan), Haute-Languedoc (capital Toulouse), and Bas-Languedoc (capital Montpellier). Of the southwest provinces, a part of Guyenne (capital Bordeaux) is included, also Navarre (capital Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port) and Béarn (capital Pau).

Besides these general divisions, there were many minor *petits pays* compressed within the greater, such as Armagnac, Comminges, the Condanois, the Pays-Entre-Deux-Mers, the Landes, etc. These, too, naturally come within the scope of this book.

Finally, in the new order of things, the ancient provinces lost their nomenclature after the Revolution, and the Département of the Landes (and three others) was carved out of Guyenne; the Département of the Basses-Pyrénées absorbed Navarre, Béarn and the Basque provinces; Bigorre became the Hautes-Pyrénées; Foix became Ariège; Roussillon became the Pyrénées-Orientales, and Haute-Languedoc and Bas-Languedoc gave Hérault, Gard, Haute-Garonne and the Aude. For the most part all come within the scope of these pages, and together these modern départements form an unbreakable historical and topographical frontier link from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean.

This bird's-eye view of the Pyrenean provinces, then, is a sort of picturesque, informal report of things seen and facts garnered through more or less familiarity with the region, its history, its institutions and its people. Châteaux and other historical monuments, agriculture and landscape, market-places and peasant life, all find a place here, inasmuch as all relate to one another, and all blend into that very nearly perfect whole which makes France so delightful to the traveller.

Everywhere in this delightful region, whether on the mountain side or in the plains, the very atmosphere is charged with an extreme of life and colour, and both the physiognomy of landscape and the physiognomy of humanity is unfailing in its appeal to one's interest.

Here there are no guide-book phrases in the speech of the people, no struggling lines of "conducted" tourists with a polyglot conductor, and no futile labelling of doubtful historic monuments; there are enough of undoubted authenticity without this.

Thoroughly tired and wearied of the progress and super-civilization of the cities and towns of the well-worn roads, it becomes a real pleasure to seek out the by-paths of the old French provinces, and their historic and romantic associations, in their very crudities and fragments every whit as interesting as the better known stamping-grounds of the conventional tourist.

The folk of the Pyrenees, in their faces and figures, in their speech and customs, are as varied as their histories. They are a bright, gay, careless folk, with ever a care and a kind word for the stranger, whether they are Catalan, Basque or Béarnais.

Since the economic aspects of a country have somewhat to do with its history it is important to recognize that throughout the Pyrenees the grazing and wine-growing industries predominate among agricultural pursuits.

There is a very considerable raising of sheep and of horses and mules, and somewhat of beef, and there is some growing of grain, but in the main – outside of the sheep-grazing of the higher valleys – it is the wine-growing industry that gives the distinctive note of activity and prosperity to the lower slopes and plains.

For the above mentioned reason it is perhaps well to recount here just what the wine industry and the wine-drinking of France amounts to.

One may have a preference for Burgundy or Bordeaux, Champagne or Saumur, or even plain, plebeian beer, but it is a pity that the great mass of wine-drinkers, outside of Continental Europe, do not make their distinctions with more knowledge of wines when they say this or that is the *best* one, instead of making their estimate by the prices on the wine-card. Anglo-Saxons

(English and Americans) are for the most part not connoisseurs in wine, because they don't know the fundamental facts about wine-growing.

For red wines the Bordeaux – less full-bodied and heavy – are very near rivals of the best Burgundies, and have more bouquet and more flavour. The Medocs are the best among Bordeaux wines. Château-Lafitte and Château-Latour are very rare in commerce and very high in price when found. They come from the commune of Pauillac. Château Margaux, St. Estèphe and St. Julien follow in the order named and are the leaders among the red wines of Bordeaux – when you get the real thing, which you don't at bargain store prices.

The white wines of Bordeaux, the Graves, come from a rocky soil; the Sauternes, with the vintage of Château d'Yquem, lead the list, with Barsac, Entre-Deux-Mers and St. Emilion following. There are innumerable second-class Bordeaux wines, but they need not be enumerated, for if one wants a name merely there are plenty of wine merchants who will sell him any of the foregoing beautifully bottled and labelled as the "real thing."

Down towards the Pyrenees the wines change notably in colour, price and quality, and they are good wines too. Those of Bergerac and Quercy are rich, red wines sold mostly in the markets of Cahors; and the wines of Toulouse, grown on the sunny hill-slopes between Toulouse and the frontier, are thick, alcoholic wines frequently blended with real Bordeaux – to give body, not flavour.

The wines of Armagnac are mostly turned into *eau de vie*, and just as good *eau de vie* as that of Cognac, though without its flavour, and without its advertising, which is the chief reason why the two or three principal brands of cognac are called for at the wine-dealers.

At Chalosse, in the Landes, between Bayonne and Bordeaux, are also grown wines made mostly into *eau de vie*.

Béarn produces a light coloured wine, a specialty of the country, and an acquired taste like olives and Gorgonzola cheese. From Béarn, also, comes the famous *cru de Jurançon*, celebrated since the days of Henri Quatre, a simple, full-bodied, delicious-tasting, red wine.

Thirteen départements of modern France comprise largely the wine-growing region of the basin of the Garonne, included in the territory covered by this book. This region gives a wine crop of thirteen and a half millions of hectolitres a year. In thirty years the production has augmented by sixty per cent., and still dealers very often sell a fabricated imitation of the genuine thing. Wine drinking is increasing as well as alcoholism, regardless of what the doctors try to prove.

The wines of the Midi of France in general are famous, and have been for generations, to *bons vivants*. The soil, the climate and pretty much everything else is favourable to the vine, from the Spanish frontier in the Pyrenees to that of Italy in the Alpes-Maritimes. The wines of the Midi are of three sorts, each quite distinct from the others; the ordinary table wines, the cordials, and the wines for distilling, or for blending. Within the topographical confines of this book one distinguishes all three of these groups, those of Roussillon, those of Languedoc, and those of Armagnac.

The rocky soil of Roussillon, alone, for example (neighbouring Collioure, Banyuls and Rivesaltes), gives each of the three, and the heavy wines of the same region, for blending (most frequently with Bordeaux), are greatly in demand among expert wine-factors all over France. In the Département de l'Aude, the wines of Lézignan and Ginestas are attached to this last group. The traffic in these wines is concentrated at Carcassonne and Narbonne. At Limoux there is a specialty known as Blanquette de Limoux – a wine greatly esteemed, and almost as good an imitation of champagne as is that of Saumur.

In Languedoc, in the Département of Hérault, and Gard, twelve millions of hectolitres are produced yearly of a heavy-bodied red wine, also largely used for fortifying other wines and used, naturally, in the neighbourhood, pure or mixed with water. This thinning out with water is almost necessary; the drinker who formerly got outside of three bottles of port before crawling under the

table, would go to pieces long before he had consumed the same quantity of local wine unmixed with water at a Montpellier or Béziers table d'hôte.

At Cette, at Frontignan, and at Lunel are fabricated many "foreign" wines, including the Malagas, the Madères and the Xeres of commerce. Above all the *Muscat de Frontignan* is revered among its competitors, and it's not a "foreign" wine either, but the juice of dried grapes or raisins, – grape juice if you like, – a sweet, mild dessert wine, very, very popular with the ladies.

There is a considerable crop of table raisins in the Midi, particularly at Montauban and in maritime Provence which, if not rivalling those of Malaga in looks, have certainly a more delicate flavour.

Along with the wines of the Midi may well be coupled the olives. For oil those of the Bouches-du-Rhône are the best. They bring the highest prices in the foreign market, but along the easterly slopes of the Pyrenees, in Roussillon, in the Aude, and in Hérault and Gard they run a close second. The olives of France are not the fat, plump, "queen" olives, sold usually in little glass jars, but a much smaller, greener, less meaty variety, but richer in oil and nutriment.

The olive trees grow in long ranks and files, amid the vines or even cereals, very much trimmed (in goblet shape, so that the ripening sun may reach the inner branches) and are of small size. Their pale green, shimmering foliage holds the year round, but demands a warm sunny climate. The olive trees of the Midi of France – as far west as the Comté de Foix in the Pyrenees, and as far north as Montelimar on the Rhône – are quite the most frequently noted characteristic of the landscape. The olive will not grow, however, above an altitude of four hundred metres.

The foregoing pages outline in brief the chief characteristics of the present day aspect of the old Pyrenean French provinces of which Béarn and Basse-Navarre, with the Comté de Foix were the heart and soul.

The topographical aspect of the Pyrenees, their history, and as full a description of their inhabitants as need be given will be found in a section dedicated thereto.

For the rest, the romantic stories of kings and counts, and of lords and ladies, and their feudal fortresses and Renaissance châteaux, with a mention of such structures of interest as naturally come within nearby vision will be found duly recorded further on.

CHAPTER II

FEUDAL FRANCE – ITS PEOPLE AND ITS CHÂTEAUX

IT was not the Revolution alone that brought about a division of landed property in France. The Crusades, particularly that of Saint Bernard, accomplished the same thing, though perhaps to a lesser extent. The seigneurs were impoverished already by excesses of all kinds, and they sold parts of their lands to any who would buy, and on almost any terms. Sometimes it was to a neighbouring, less powerful, seigneur; sometimes to a rich bourgeois – literally a town-dweller, not simply one vulgarly rich – or even to an ecclesiastic; and sometimes to that vague entity known as “*le peuple*.” The peasant proprietor was a factor in land control before the Revolution; the mere recollection of the fact that Louis-le-Hutin enfranchised the serfs demonstrates this.

The serfdom of the middle ages, in some respects, did not differ from ancient slavery, and in the most stringent of feudal times there were numerous serfs, servants and labourers attached to the seigneur’s service. These he sold, gave away, exchanged, or bequeathed, and in these sales, children were often separated from their parents. The principal cause of enfranchisement was the necessity for help which sprang from the increase in the value of land. A sort of chivalric swindle under the name of “the right of taking” was carried on among the lords, who endeavoured to get men away from one another and thus flight became the great resort of the dissatisfied peasant.

In order to get those belonging to others, and to keep his own, the proprietor, when enfranchising the serfs, benevolently gave them land. Thus grew up the peasant landowner, the seigneur keeping only more or less limited rights, but those onerous enough when he chose to put on the screw.

In this way much of the land belonging to the nobles and clergy became the patrimony of the plebeians, and remained so, for they were at first forbidden to sell their lands to noblemen or clergy. Then came other kinds of intermediary leases, something between the distribution of the land under the feudal system and its temporary occupancy of to-day through the payment of rent. Such were the “domains” in Brittany, Anjou and elsewhere, held under the emphyteusis (long lease), which was really the right of sale, where the land, let out for an indefinite time and at a fixed rent, could be taken back by the landlord only on certain expensive terms. This was practically the death knell of feudal land tenure. Afterward came leases of fifty years, for life, or for “three lifetimes,” by which time the rights of the original noble owners had practically expired.

Finally, all landowners found these systems disadvantageous. The landlord’s share in the product of the soil (as a form of rent) continually increased, while the condition of the farmer grew worse and worse.

Since the Revolution, the modern method of cultivation of land on a large scale constitutes an advance over anything previously conceived, just as the distribution of the land under the feudal régime constituted an advance over the system in vogue in earlier times.

Times have changed in France since the days when the education of the masses was unthought of. Then the curé or a monkish brother would get a few children together at indeterminate periods and teach them the catechism, a paternoster or a credo, and that was about all. Writing, arithmetic – much less the teaching of grammar – were deemed entirely unnecessary to the growing youth. Then (and the writer has seen the same thing during his last dozen years of French travel) it was a common sight to see the sign “Ecrivain Publique” hanging over, or beside, many a doorway in a large town.

The Renaissance overflow from Italy left a great impress on the art and literature of France, and all its bright array of independent principalities. The troubadours and minstrels of still earlier days had given way to the efforts and industry of royalty itself. François Premier, and, for aught we

know, all his followers, penned verses, painted pictures, and patronized authors and artists, until the very soil itself breathed an art atmosphere.

Marguerite de Valois (1492-1549), the sister of François Premier, was called the tenth muse even before she became Queen of Navarre, and when she produced her Boccaccio-like stories, afterwards known as the “Heptameron of the Queen of Navarre,” enthusiasm for letters among the noblesse knew no bounds.

The spirit of romance which went out from the soft southland was tinged with a certain license and liberty which was wanting in the “Romaunt of the Rose” of Guillaume de Lorris, and like works, but it served to strike a passionate fire in the hearts of men which at least was bred of a noble sentiment.

What the Renaissance actually did for a French national architecture is a matter of doubt. But for its coming, France might have achieved a national scheme of building as an outgrowth of the Greek, Roman, and Saracen structures which had already been planted between the Alps and the Pyrenees. The Gothic architecture of France comes nearer to being a national achievement than any other, but its application in its first form to a great extent was to ecclesiastical building. In domestic and civil architecture, and in walls and ramparts, there exists very good Gothic indeed in France, but of a heavier, less flowery style than that of its highest development in churchly edifices.

The Romanesque, and even the pointed-arch architecture (which, be it remembered, need not necessarily be Gothic) of southern and mid-France, with the Moorish and Saracenic interpolations found in the Pyrenees, was the typical civic, military and domestic manner of building before the era of the imitation of the debased Lombardic which came in the days of Charles VIII and François Premier. This variety spread swiftly all over France – and down the Rhine, and into England for that matter – and crowded out the sloping roof, the dainty colonnette and ribbed vaulting in favour of a heavier, but still ornate, barrel-vaulted and pillared, low-set edifice with most of the faults of the earlier Romanesque, and none of its excellences.

The parts that architects and architecture played in the development of France were tremendous. Voltaire first promulgated this view, and his aphorisms are many; “My fancy is to be an architect.” “Mansard was one of the greatest architects known to France.” “Architects were the ruin of Louis XIV.” “The Cathedral builders were sublime barbarians.” Montesquieu was more sentimental when he said: “Love is an architect who builds palaces on ruins if he pleases.”

The greatest architectural expression of a people has ever been in its Christian monuments, but references to the cathedrals, churches and chapels of the Pyrenean states have for the most part been regretfully omitted from these pages, giving place to fortresses, châteaux, great bridges, towers, donjons, and such public monuments as have a special purport in keeping with the preconceived limits of a volume which deals largely with the romance of feudal times.

Generally speaking, the architectural monuments of these parts are little known by the mass of travellers, except perhaps Henri Quatre’s ancestral château at Pau, the famous walls of Carcassonne, and perhaps Bayonne’s bridges or the Eglise St. Saturnin and the bizarre cathedral of St. Etienne at Toulouse. All of these are excellent of their kind; indeed perhaps they are superlative in their class; but when one mentions Perpignan’s Castillet, the Château de Puylaurens, the arcaded Gothic houses of Agde, Béziers’ fortress-cathedral, the fortress-church of St. Bertrand de Comminges or a score of other tributary monumental relics, something hitherto unthought of is generally disclosed.

Almost the whole range of architectural display is seen here between the Mediterranean and the Gulf of Gascony, and any rambling itinerary laid out between the two seas will discover as many structural and decorative novelties as will be found in any similar length of roadway in France.

Leaving the purely ecclesiastical edifices – cathedrals and great churches – out of the question, the entire Midi of France, and the French slopes and valleys of the Pyrenees in particular, abounds in architectural curiosities which are marvels to the student and lover of art.

There are *châteaux*, *chastels* and *chastillons*, one differing from another by subtle distinctions which only the expert can note. Then there are such feudal accessories as watch-towers, donjons and *clochers*, and great fortifying walls and gates and barbicans, and even entire fortified towns like Carcassonne and La Bastide. Surely the feudality, or rather its relics, cannot be better studied than here, – “where the people held the longest aloof from the Crown.”

The watch-towers which flank many of the valleys of the Pyrenees are a great curiosity and quandary to archæologists and historians. Formerly they flashed the news of wars or invasions from one outpost to another, much as does wireless telegraphy of to-day. Of these watch-towers, or *tours télégraphiques*, as the modern French historians call them, that of Castel-Biel, near Luchon, is the most famous. It rises on the peak of a tiny mountain in the valley of the Pique and is a square structure of perhaps a dozen or fifteen feet on each side. Sixteen feet or so from the ground, on the northwest façade, is an opening leading to the first floor. This tower is typical of its class, and is the most accessible to the hurried traveller.

The feudal history of France is most interesting to recall in this late day when every man is for himself. Not all was oppression by any means, and the peasant landowner – as distinct from the *vilain* and *serf* – was a real person, and not a supposition, even before the Revolution; though Thomas Carlyle on his furzy Scotch moor didn't know it.

Feudal France consisted of seventy thousand fiefs or rere-fiefs, of which three thousand gave their names to their seigneurs. All seigneurs who possessed three *châtellenies* and a walled hamlet (*ville close*) had the right of administering justice without reference to a higher court. There were something more than seven thousand of these *villes closes*, within which, or on the lands belonging to the seigneurs thereof, were one million eight hundred and seventy-two thousand monuments, – churches, monasteries, abbeys, *châteaux*, castles, and royal or episcopal palaces. It was thus that religious, civic and military architecture grew side by side and, when new styles and modifications came in, certain interpolations were forthwith incorporated in the more ancient fabrics, giving that *mélange* of picturesque walls and roofs which makes France the best of all lands in which to study the architecture of mediævalism. Among these mediæval relics were interspersed others more ancient, – Roman and Greek basilicas, temples, baths, arenas, amphitheatres and aqueducts in great profusion, whose remains to-day are considerably more than mere fragments.

The hereditary aristocracy of France, the rulers and the noblesse of the smaller kingdoms, dukedoms and countships, were great builders, as befitted their state, and, being mostly great travellers and persons of wealth, they really surrounded themselves with many exotic forms of luxury which a more isolated or exclusive race would never have acquired. There is no possible doubt whatever but that it is the very mixture of styles and types that make the architecture of France so profoundly interesting even though one decries the fact that it is not *national*.

One well recognized fact concerning France can hardly fail to be reiterated by any who write of the manners and customs and the arts of mediæval times, and that is that the figures of population of those days bear quite similar resemblances to those of to-day. Historians of a hundred years back, even, estimated the total population of France in the fifteenth century as being very nearly the same as at the Revolution, – perhaps thirty millions. To-day eight or perhaps ten millions more may be counted, but the increase is invariably in the great cities, Paris, Lyons, Marseilles, Bordeaux, Rouen, etc. Oloron and Orthez in Béarn, Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port in Navarre, or Agde or Elne in Roussillon, remain at the same figure at which they have stood for centuries, unless, as is more often the case, they have actually fallen off in numbers. And still France is abnormally prosperous, collectively and individually, so far as old-world nations go.

Originally the nobility in France was of four degrees: the *noblesse* of the blood royal, the *haute-noblesse*, the *noblesse ordinaire* and the *noblesse* who were made noble by patent of the ruling prince. All of these distinctions were hereditary, save, in some instances, the *noblesse ordinaire*.

In the height of feudal glory there were accredited over four thousand families belonging to the *ancienne noblesse*, and ninety thousand *familles nobles* (descendant branches of the above houses) who could furnish a hundred thousand knightly combatants for any “little war” that might be promulgated.

Sometimes the family name was noble and could be handed down, and sometimes not. Sometimes, too, inheritance was through the mother, not the father; this was known as the *noblesse du ventre*. A foreign noble naturalized in France remained noble, and retained his highest title of right.

The French nobles most often took their titles from their fiefs, and these, with the exception of baronies and *marquisats*, were usually of Roman origin. The chief titles below the *noblesse du sang royal* were *ducs*, *barons*, *marquis*, *comtes*, *vicomtes*, *vidames*, and *chevaliers* and each had their special armorial distinctions, some exceedingly simple, and some so elaborate with quarterings and blazonings as to be indefinable by any but a heraldic expert.

The coats of arms of feudal France, or *armoiries*, as the French call them (a much better form of expression by the way), are a most interesting subject of study. Some of these *armoiries* are really beautiful, some quaint and some enigmatic, as for instance those of the King of Navarre.

The Revolutionary Assembly abolished such things in France, but Napoleon restored them all again, and created a new noblesse as well:

“Aussitôt maint esprit fécond en reveries,
Inventa le blason avec les armoiries.”

sang the poet Boileau.

Primarily *armoiries* were royal bequests, but in these days a pork-packer, an iron-founder or a cheese-maker concocts a trade-mark on heraldic lines and the thing has fallen flat. Fancy a pig sitting on a barrel top and flanked by two ears of corn, or a pyramid of cheeses overtopped by the motto “A full stomach maketh good health.” Why it’s almost as ridiculous as a crossed pick-axe, a shovel and a crow-bar would be for a navvy on a railway line! In the old days it was not often thus, though a similar ridiculous thing, which no one seemed to take the trouble to suppress, was found in the “*Armoiries des gueux*.” One of these showed two twists of tobacco *en croix*, with the following motto: “*Dieu vous bénisse!*”

At the head of the list of French *armoiries* were those of *domain* or *souveraineté*.

Then followed several other distinct classes. “*Armoiries de Pretention*,” where the patronal rights over a city or a province were given the holders, even though the province was under the chief domination of a more powerful noble.

“*Armoiries de Concession*,” given for services by a sovereign prince – such as the *armoiries* belonging to Jeanne d’Arc.

“*Armoiries de Patronage*,” in reality quarterings added to an *armoirie* already existing. These were frequently additions to the blazonings of families or cities. Paris took on the arms of the King of France, the insistent Louis, by this right.

“*Armoiries de Dignité*,” showing the distinction or dignities with which a person was endowed, and which were added to existing family arms.

“*Armoiries de Famille*,” as their name indicates, distinguishing one noble family from another. This class was further divided into three others, “*Substituées*,” “*Succession*,” or “*Alliance*,” terms which explain themselves.

“*Armoiries de Communauté*,” distinctions given to noble chapters of military bodies, corporations, societies and the like.

Finally there was a class which belonged to warriors alone.

At all times illustrious soldiers adopted a *devise*, or symbol, which they caused to be painted on their shields. These were only considered as *armoiries* when they were inherited by one who had followed in the footsteps of his ancestors. This usage dates from the end of the ninth century, and it is from this period that *armoiries*, properly called, came into being.

The banners of the feudal sovereigns were, many of them, very splendid affairs, often bearing all their arms and quarterings. They were borne wherever their owners went, – in war, to the capital, and at their country houses. At all ceremonious functions the banners were ever near the persons of their sovereigns as a sign of suzerainty. The owner of a banner would often have it cut out of metal and placed on the gables of his house as a weather-vane, a custom which, in its adapted form, has endured through the ages to this day. In tournaments, the nobles had their banners attached to their lances, and made therewith always the sign of the cross before commencing their passes. Also their banners or *banderoles* were hung from the trumpets of the heralds of their house.

Another variety of feudal standard, differing from either the *bannière* or the *pennon*, was the *gonfanon*. This was borne only by *bacheliers*, vassals of an overlord.

“N’i a riche hom ni baron
Qui n’ait lès lui son gonfanon.”

The feudal banner, the house flag of the feudal seigneurs, and borne by them in battle, was less splendid than the *bannière royale*, which was hung from a window balcony to mark a kingly lodging-place. It was in fact only a small square of stuff hanging from a transversal baton. This distinguished, in France, a certain grade of knights known as *chevaliers-bannerets*. These chevaliers had the privilege of exercising certain rights that other knights did not possess.

To be created *chevalier-banneret* one had to be twenty-one years of age. If a chevalier was already a *bachelier*, a grade inferior to that of a *banneret*, to become a full blown *chevalier* he had only to cut the points from his standard – a *pennon*– when it and he became a *banneret*; that is to say, he had the right to carry a banner, or to possess a *fief de bannière*.

There were three classes of fiefs in feudal France. First; the *fief de bannière*, which could furnish twenty-five combatants under a banner or flag of their own. Second; the *fief de haubert*, which could furnish a well-mounted horseman fully armed, accompanied by two or three *varlets* or *valets*. Third; the *fief de simple écuyer*, whose sole offering was a single vassal, lightly armed.

There was, too, a class of nobles without estates. They were known as seigneurs of a *fief en l’air*, or a *fief volant*, much like many courtesy titles so freely handed around to-day in some monarchies.

A vassal was a dweller in a fief under the control of the seigneur. The word comes from the ancient Frankish *gessell*.

The chevaliers, not the highest of noble ranks, but a fine title of distinction nevertheless, bore one of four prefixes, *don*, *sire*, *messire*, or *monseigneur*. They could eat at the same table with the monarch, and they alone had the right to bear a banner-lance in warfare, or wear a double coat of mail.

In 1481, Louis XI began to abolish the bow and the lance in France, in so far as they applied to effective warfare. The first fire-arms had already appeared a century before, and though the *coulevrines* and *canons à main* were hardly efficient weapons, when compared with those of to-day, they were far more effective than the bow and arrow at a distance, or the javelin, the pike and the lance near at hand. Then developed the *arquebuse*, literally a hand-cannon, clumsy and none too sure of aim, but a fearful death-dealer if it happened to hit.

The feudal lords, the seigneurs and other nobles, had the right of levying taxes upon their followers. These taxes, or *impôts*, took varying forms; such as the obligation to grind their corn at the mills of the seigneur, paying a heavy proportion of the product therefor; to press their grapes

at his wine-press, and bake their bread in his ovens. At Montauban, in the Garonne, one of these old seigneurial flour mills may still be seen. The seigneurs were not ostensibly “in trade,” but their control of the little affairs of the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick-maker virtually made them so.

More definite taxes – demanded in cash when the peasants could pay, otherwise in kind – were the seigneurial taxes on fires; on the right of trade (the sale of wine, bread or meat); the *vingtaine*, whereby the peasant gave up a twentieth of his produce to the seigneur; and such oddities as a tax on the first kiss of the newly married; bardage, a sort of turnpike road duty for the privilege of singing certain songs; and on all manner of foolish fancies.

After the taxation by the seigneurs there came that by the clerics, who claimed their “ecclesiastical tenth,” a tax which was levied in France just previous to the Revolution with more severity, even, than in Italy.

Finally the people rose, and the French peasants delivered themselves all over the land to a riot of evil, as much an unlicensed tyranny as was the oppression of their feudal lords. One may thus realize the means which planted feudal France with great fortresses, châteaux and country houses, and the motives which caused their destruction to so large an extent.

It was the tyranny of the master and the cruelty of the servant that finally culminated in the Revolution. Not only the petty seigneurs had been the oppressors, but the Crown, represented by the figurehead of the Bourbon king in his capital, put the pressure on the peasant folk still harder by releasing it on the nobles. The tax on the people, that great, vague, non-moving mass of the population, has ever produced the greatest revenue in France, as, presumably, it has elsewhere. In the days before the Revolution it was *le peuple* who paid, and it was the people who paid the enormous Franco-German war indemnity in 1871.

The feudality in France, in its oppressive sense, died long years before the Revolution, but the aristocracy still lives in spite of the efforts of the Assembly to crush it – the Assembly and the mob who sang:

“Ah! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira,
Les aristocrates à la lanterne!
Ah! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira,
Les aristocrates on les pendra!”

And the French noblesse of to-day, the proud old French aristocracy, is not, on the whole, as bad as it has frequently been painted. They may, in the majority, be royalists, may be even Bonapartists, or Orléanists, instead of republicans, but surely there’s no harm in that in these days when certain political parties look upon socialists as anarchists and free-traders as communists.

The honour, power and profit derived by the noblesse in France all stopped with the Revolution. The National Assembly, however, refused to abolish titles. To do that body justice they saw full well that they could not take away that which did not exist as a tangible entity, and it is to their credit that they did not establish the new order of Knights of the Plough as they were petitioned to do. This would have been as fatal a step as can possibly be conceived, though for that matter a plough might just as well be a symbol of knighthood as a thistle, a *jaratelle*, a gold stick or a black rod.

In France a whole *seigneurie* was slave to the seigneur. Under feudal rule the clergy (not the humble *abbés* and *curés*, but the bishops and archbishops) were frequently themselves overlords. They, at any rate, enjoyed as high privileges as any in the land, and if the Revolution benefited the lower clergy it robbed the higher churchmen.

Just previous to the Revolution, the clergy had a revenue of one hundred and thirty million *livres* of which only forty-two million five hundred thousand *livres* accrued to the *curés*. The difference represents the loss to the “Seigneurs of the Church.”

With the Revolution the whole kingdom was in a blaze; famished mobs clamoured, if not always for bread, at least for an anticipated vengeance, and when they didn't actually kill they robbed and burned. This accounts for the comparative infrequency of the feudal châteaux in France in anything but a ruined state. Sometimes it is but a square of wall that remains, sometimes a mere gateway, sometimes a donjon, and sometimes only a solitary tower. All these evidences are frequent enough in the provinces of the Pyrenees, from the more or less complete Châteaux of Foix and of Pau, to the ruins of Lourdes and Lourdat, and the more fragmentary remains of Ultrera, Ruscino and Coarraze.

The mediæval country house was a château; when it was protected by walls and moats it became a castle or château-fort; a distinction to be remarked.

The château of the middle ages was not only the successor of the Roman stronghold, but it was a villa or place of residence as well; when it was fortified it was a *chastel*.

A castle might be habitable, and a château might be a species of stronghold, and thus the mediæval country house might be either one thing or the other, but still the distinction will always be apparent if one will only go deeply enough into the history of any particular structure.

Light and air, which implies frequent windows, have always been desirable in all habitations of man, and only when the château bore the aspects of a fortification were window openings omitted. If it was an island castle, a moat-surrounded château, – as it frequently was in later Renaissance times, – windows and doors existed in profusion; but if it were a feudal fortress, such as one most frequently sees in the Pyrenees, openings at, or near, the ground-level were few and far between. Such windows as existed were mere narrow slits, like loop-holes, and the entrance doorway was really a fortified gate or port, frequently with a portcullis and sometimes with a *pont-levis*.

The origin of the word château (*castrum*, *castellum*, castle) often served arbitrarily to designate a fortified habitation of a seigneur, or a citadel which protected a town. One must know something of their individual histories in order to place them correctly. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, châteaux in France multiplied almost to infinity, and became habitations in fact.

In reality the middle ages saw two classes of great châteaux go up almost side by side, the feudal château of the tenth to the fifteenth centuries, and the frankly residential country houses of the Renaissance period which came after.

For the real, true history of the feudal châteaux of France, one cannot do better than follow the hundred and fifty odd pages which Viollet-le-Duc devoted to the subject in his monumental “*Dictionnaire Raisonée d'Architecture*.”

In the Midi, all the way from the Italian to the Spanish frontiers, are found the best examples of the feudal châteaux, mere ruins though they be in many cases. In the extreme north of Normandy, at Les Andelys, Arques and Falaise, at Pierrefonds and Coucy, these military châteaux stand prominent too, but mid-France, in the valley of the Loire, in Touraine especially, is the home of the great Renaissance country house.

The royal châteaux, the city dwellings and the country houses of the kings have perhaps the most interest for the traveller. Of this class are Chenonceaux and Amboise, Fontainebleau and St. Germain, and, within the scope of this book, the paternal château of Henri Quatre at Pau.

It is not alone, however, these royal residences that have the power to hold one's attention. There are others as great, as beautiful and as replete with historic events. In this class are the châteaux at Foix, at Carcassonne, at Lourdes, at Coarraze and a dozen other points in the Pyrenees, whose architectural splendours are often neglected for the routine sightseeing sanctioned and demanded by the conventional tourists.

There are no vestiges of rural habitations in France erected by the kings of either of the first two races, though it is known that Chilperic and Clotaire II had residences at Chelles, Compiègne, Nogent, Villers-Cotterets, and Creil, north of Paris.

The pre-eminent builder of the great fortress châteaux of other days was Foulques Nerra, and his influence went wide and far. These establishments were useful and necessary, but they were hardly more than prison-like strongholds, quite bare of the luxuries which a later generation came to regard as necessities.

The refinements came in with Louis IX. The artisans and craftsmen became more and more ingenious and artistic, and the fine tastes and instincts of the French with respect to architecture soon came to find their equal expression in furnishings and fitments. Hard, high seats and beds, which looked as though they had been brought from Rome in Cæsar's time, gave way to more comfortable chairs and canopied beds, carpets were laid down where rushes were strewn before, and walls were hung with cloths and draperies where grim stone and plaster had previously sent a chill down the backs of lords and ladies. Thus developed the life in French châteaux from one of simple security and defence, to one of luxurious ease and appointments.

The sole medium of communication between many of the French provinces, at least so far as the masses were concerned, was the local *patois*. All who did not speak it were foreigners, just as are English, Americans or Germans of to-day. The peoples of the Romance tongue stood in closer relation, perhaps, than other of the provincials of old, and the men of the Midi, whether they were Gascons from the valley of the Garonne, or Provençaux from the Bouches-du-Rhône were against the king and government as a common enemy.

The feudal lords were a gallant race on the whole; they didn't spend all their time making war; they played *boules* and the *jeu-de-paume*, and held court at their château, where minstrels sang, and knights made verses for their lady loves, and men and women amused themselves much as country-house folk do to-day.

The following, extracted from the book of accounts of one of the minor noblesse of Béarn in the sixteenth century, is intimate and interesting. The master of this feudal household had a system of bookkeeping which modern chatelains might adopt with advantage. The items are curiously disposed.

		Francs Sous Deniers		
Pot de vinaigre		5	0	
Livre de l'huile d'olive		6	0	
Sac du sel		30	0	
Aux pauvre		30	0	
Pour deux laquais et la mulette		18	0	
Au valet pour boire		1	0	
En	À Tarbes pour la couchée de lundi	4	10	0
Voyage	Un relevé pour la mulette	8	2	6
	Un fer pour la mulette	5	0	
	Aux nomads	1	10	0

Evidently "la mulette" was a very necessary adjunct and required quite as much as its master.

CHAPTER III

THE PYRENEES – THEIR GEOGRAPHY AND TOPOGRAPHY

ONE of the great joys of the traveller is the placid contemplation of his momentary environment. The visitor to Biarritz, Pau, Luchon, Foix or Carcassonne has ever before his eyes the massive Pyrenean bulwark between France and Spain; and the mere existence of this natural line of defence accounts to no small extent for the conditions of life, the style of building, and even the manners of the men who live within its shadow.

The Pyrenees have ever formed an undisputed frontier boundary line, though kingdoms and dukedoms, buried within its fastnesses or lying snugly enfolded in its gentle valleys, have fluctuated and changed owners so often that it is difficult for most people to define the limits of French and Spanish Navarre or the country of the French and Spanish Basques. It is still more difficult when it comes to locating the little Pyrenean republic of Andorra, that tiniest of nations, a little sister of San Marino and Monaco. Some day the histories of these three miniature European “powers” (sic) should be made into a book. It would be most interesting reading and a novelty.

Unlike the Alps, the Pyrenees lack a certain impressive grandeur, but they are more varied in their outline, and form a continuous chain from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean, while their gently sloping green valleys smile more sweetly than anything of the kind in Switzerland or Savoie.

They possess character, of a certain grim kind to be sure, particularly in their higher passes, and a general air of sterility, which, however, is less apparent as one descends to lower levels. The very name of Pyrenees comes probably from the word *biren*, meaning “high pastures,” so this refutes the belief that they are not abundantly endowed with this form of nature’s wealth.

From east to west the chain of the Pyrenees has a length of four hundred and fifty kilometres, or, following the détours of the crests of the Hispano-Français frontier, perhaps six hundred. Between Pau and Huesca their width, counting from one lowland plain to another, is a trifle over a hundred and twenty kilometres, the slope being the most rapid on the northern, or French, side. The Pyrenees are less thickly wooded than the Savoian Alps, and there is very much less perpetual snow and fewer glaciers.

In reality they are broken into two distinct parts by the Val d’Aran, forming the Pyrénées-Orientales and the Pyrénées-Occidentales. Of the detached mountain masses, the chief is the Canigou, lying almost by the Mediterranean shore, and a little northward of the main chain. Its highest peak is the Puigmal (*puig* or *puy* being the Languedocian word for peak), rising to nearly three thousand metres.

For long the Canigou was supposed to be the loftiest peak of the Pyrenees, but the Pic du Midi exceeds it by a hundred metres. However, this well proportioned, isolated mass looks more pretentious than it really is, standing, as it does, quite away from the main chain. From its peak Marseilles can be seen – by a Marseillais, who will also fancy that he can hear the turmoil of the Cannebière and detect the odour of the saffron in his beloved *bouillabaise*. At any rate one can certainly see as much of the earth’s surface spread out before him here as from any other spot of which he has recollection.

The Pyrénées-Occidentales abound in more numerous and better defined mountains than the more easterly portion. Here are the famous Monts Maudits, with the Pic de Nethou, the highest of the Pyrenees (three thousand four hundred and four metres), with a summit plateau or belvedere perhaps twenty metres in length by five in width.

The Vignemal (three thousand two hundred and ninety-eight metres) is the highest peak wholly on French soil and dominates the famous *col*, or pass, known as the Brèche de Roland.

The Pic du Midi, back of Bigorre, is justly the best known of all the crests of the Pyrenees. Its height is two thousand eight hundred and seventy-seven metres, and it is worthy of a special study, and a book all to itself. The observatory recently established here is one of the *chefs-d'œuvre* of science. The astronomical, climatological and geographical importance of this prominent peak was already marked out on the maps of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and its glory has been often sung in verse by Guillaume Saluste, Sire du Bartas, gentilhomme Gascon; and by Bernard Palissy, better known as a potter than as a poet.

Towards the Gulf of Gascony the Pyrenees send out their ramifications in much gentler slopes than on the Mediterranean side. Forests and pastures are more profuse and luxuriant, but the peaks are still of granite, as they mostly are throughout the range. Grouped along the flanks of the river Bidassoa this section of the chain is known to geographers as the “Montagnes du pays Basque.”

At the foot of these Basque Mountains passes the lowest level route between France and Spain, – that followed by the railway and the “Route Internationale, Paris-Madrid.”

This easy and commodious passage of the Pyrenees has ever been the theatre of the chief struggles between the peoples of the Spanish peninsula and France. At Ronçevaux the rear-guard of the army of Charlemagne – “his paladins and peers” – were destroyed in 778, and it was here that the French and Spanish fought in 1794 and 1813.

The French slopes of the Pyrenees belong almost wholly to the basin or watershed of the Garonne, one of the four great waterways of France, the other three being the Loire, the Seine and the Rhône. In the upper valley of the Garonne is the Plateau de Lannemazan. It lies in reality between the Garonne and the Adour. The Adour on the west and the Tech on the east, with their tributaries, play an important part in draining off the waters from the mountain sources, but they are entirely overshadowed by the Garonne, which, rising in Spain, in the Val d’Aran, flows six hundred and five kilometres before reaching salt water below Bordeaux, through its estuary the Gironde. Nearly five hundred kilometres of this length are navigable, and the economic value of this river to Agen, Montauban and Toulouse is very great.

Between the Adour and the Gironde lies that weird morass-like region of the Landes, once peopled only by sheep-herders on stilts and by charcoal-burners, but now producing a quantity of resin and pine which is making the whole region prosperous and content.

The source of the Garonne is at an altitude of nearly two thousand metres, and is virtually a cascade. Another tiny source, known as the Garonne-Oriental, swells the flood of the parent stream by flowing into it just below St. Gaudens, the nearest “big town” of France to the Spanish frontier.

The Ariège is the only really important tributary entering the Garonne from the region of the Pyrenees. Its length is a hundred and fifty-seven kilometres, and its source is on the Pic Nègre, at an altitude of two thousand metres, three kilometres from the frontier, but on French soil. It waters two important cities of the Comté de Foix, the capital Foix and Pamiers.

On the west, the chain of the Pyrenees slopes gently down to the great bight, known so sadly to travellers by sea as the Bay of Biscay. From the mouth of the Gironde southward it is further designated as the Golfe de Gascogne. There is no perceptible indentation of the coast line to indicate this, but its waters bathe the sand dunes of the Landes, the Basque coasts, and the extreme northeastern boundary of Spain.

The shore-line is straight, uniformly monotonous and inhospitable, the great waves which roll in from the Atlantic beating up a soapy surf and long dikes of sand in weird, unlovely contours. For two hundred and forty kilometres, all along the shore-line of the Gironde and the Landes, this is applicable, the only relief being the basin of Archachon (Bordeaux’ own special watering-place), the port of Bayonne, – at the mouth of the Adour, – the delightful rocky picturesqueness immediately around Biarritz, and Saint-Jean-de-Luz and its harbour, and the estuary of the Bidassoa, that epoch-making river which, with the crest of the Pyrenees, marks the Franco-Espagnol frontier.

The French coast line at the easterly termination of the Pyrenees possesses an entirely different aspect from that of the west. Practically there is no tide in the Mediterranean, and the gateway between France and Spain through the eastern Pyrenees is less gracious than that on the west. The Pyrénées-Orientales come plump down to the blue waters of the great inland sea just north of Cap Créus with little or no intimation of a slope.

The frontier commences at Cap Cerbère, and at Port Vendres (the Portus-Veneris of the ancients) one finds one of the principal Mediterranean sea ports of France, and the nearest to the great French possessions in Africa.

On Cap Créus in Spain, and on Cap Bear in France, at an elevation of something over two hundred metres, are two remarkable lighthouses whose rays carry a distance of over forty kilometres seaward.

The *étangs*, Saint Nazaire and Leucate, cut the coast line here, and three tiny rivers, whose sources are high up in the mountain valleys of the Tech, the Tet and the Aglay, flow into the sea before Cap Leucate, the boundary between old Languedoc and the Comté de Roussillon.

Off-shore is the tempestuous Golfe des Lions, where the lion banners of the Arlesien ships floated in days gone by. The Aude, the Orb and the Hérault mingle their waters with the Mediterranean here, and on the Montagne d'Agde rises another of those remarkable French lighthouses, this one throwing its light a matter of forty-five kilometres seawards.

With Perpignan, Narbonne, Béziers and Agde behind, one draws slowly out from under the shadow of the Pyrenees until the soil flattens out into a powdery, dusty plain, with here and there a pond, or great bay, of soft, brackish water, whose principal value lies in its fecundity at producing mosquitoes.

Aigues-Mortes cradles itself on the shores of one of these great inlets of the Mediterranean, and Saintes Maries on another. Little gulfs, canals, dwarf seaside pines, cypresses, olive trees and vineyards are the chief characteristics of the landscape, while inland the surface of the soil rolls away in gentle billows towards Nîmes, Montpellier and St. Giles, with the flat plain of the Camargue lying between.

Since the Christian era began, it is assumed that this coast line between the Pyrenees and the Rhône has advanced a matter of fourteen kilometres seaward, and since Aigues-Mortes, which now lies far inland, is known to be the port from which the sainted Louis set out on his Crusade, there is no gainsaying the statement. The immediate region surrounding Aigues-Mortes is a most fascinating one to visit, but would be a terrible place in which to be obliged to spend a life-time.

Between Roussillon and Spain there are fifteen passes by which one may cross the chain of the Pyrenees, though indeed two only are practicable for wheeled traffic.

The Col de Perthus is the chief one, and is traversed by the ancient "Route Royale" from Paris to Barcelona. There is a town by the same name, with a population of five hundred and a really good hotel. It's worth making the journey here just to see how a dull French village can sleep its time away. The passage is defended by the fine Fortress de Bellegarde. It was on the Col de Perthus that Pompey erected the famous "trophy," surmounted by his statue bearing the following legend:

FROM THE ALPS TO THE ULTERIOR EXTREMITY OF SPAIN,
POMPEY HAS FORCED SUBMISSION TO THE ROMAN REPUBLIC FROM
EIGHT HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-SIX CITIES AND TOWNS.

Twenty years after, Caesar erected another tablet beside the former. No trace of either remains to-day, and there are only frontier boundary stones marking the territorial limits of France and Spain, which replace those torn down in the Revolution.

Proceeding by the coast line, a difficult road into Spain lies by the Col de Banyuls, just where the Pyrenees plunge beneath the Mediterranean, a mere shelf of a road.

The *cirques*, or great amphitheatres of mountains, are a characteristic of the Pyrenees, and the Cirque de Gavarnie is the king of them all. It represents, very nearly, a sheer perpendicular wall rising to a height of five hundred metres, and three thousand five hundred metres in circumference. Perpetual snow is an accompaniment of some of its gorges and neighbouring peaks, and twelve cascades tumble down its rock walls at various points. There is nothing quite so impressive in the world – outside Yosemite or the Yellowstone.

Gavarnie, its *cirque* and its village, is the natural wonder of the Pyrenees. Said Victor Hugo: “*Grand nom, petit village.*” To explore the Cirque de Gavarnie is a passion with many; when you get in this state of mind you become what the touring Frenchman knows as a “*gavarniste*,” as an Alpine climber becomes an “*alpiniste*.”

As for the climate of the Pyrenees, it is, for a mountain region, soft and mild; not so mild as that of the French Riviera perhaps, nor of Barcelona, nor San Sebastian in Spain, but on the whole not cold, and certainly more humid than in the Alpes-Maritimes, on the Côte d’Azur.

Generally blowing from the northwest in winter, the wind accumulates great masses of cloud in the bight of the Golfe de Gascogne and sweeps them up against the barrier of the Pyrenees, there to be held in suspension until an exceedingly stiff wind blows them away or the sun burns them off. The French Riviera is cursed with the mistral, but it has the blessing of almost continual sunshine, while in the Pyrénées-Occidentales the wind is less strong as it comes only from the sea in the northwest, instead of from the north by the Rhône valley, and the “disagreeable months” (November, December and January) often bring damp and humid, if not frigidly cold weather with them.

The rainfall is often as much as eight decimetres per annum in the Landes, one metre in the Pyrenees proper, and a metre and a half in the Basque country. The average rainfall for France is approximately eight decimetres, perhaps thirty-two inches.

In the Pyrenees the temperature is, normally, neither very hot nor very cold. Perpignan is the warmest in winter. Its average is 15 °Centigrade (59° F.), about that of Nice, whilst that for France is 6 °Centigrade (43° F.).

The climate of the Pyrenees comes within the *climat Girondin*, and the average for the year is 13 °Centigrade. The *climat-maritime* is a further division, and is considerably more elevated in degree. This comes from the western and northwestern winds off the sea, which, it may be remarked, almost invariably bring rain with them. At Montauban the saying is: “*Montagne claire, Bordeaux obscure, pluie à coup sur.*” In Gascogne: “*Jamais pluie au printemps ne passe pour mauvais temps.*” At Bordeaux the average summer temperature is but 29 °Centigrade, at Toulouse 21.5 °Centigrade and Pau about the same, with a winter temperature often 4° or 5° below zero Centigrade.

The general aspect of the region of the Pyrenees is one of the most varied and agreeable in all southern France. There is a grandeur and natural character about it that has not fallen before the march of twentieth century progress, save in the “resorts,” such as Biarritz or Pau; and yet the primitiveness and savagery is not so uncomfortable as to make the traveller long for the super-civilization of great capitals. It is virgin in its beauty and varied wildness, and yet it is a soft, pleasant land where even the winter snows of the mountains seem less rigorous than the snow and cold of Savoie or Switzerland. On one side is the great bulwark of the Pyrenees, and on two others the dazzling waters of the ocean, while to the north the valley of the Garonne, west of the Cevennes, is not at all a frigid, austere, frost-bound region, save only in the very coldest “snaps.”

The ranges of foothills in the Pyrenees divide the surface of the land into slopes and valleys every bit as charming as those of Switzerland, and yet oh! so different! And the fresh, limpid rivulets and rivers are real rivers, and not mere trickling brooks, whose colouring and transparency are the marvel of all who view. The majesty of the sea on either side, and of the mountains between, makes the very aspect of life luxurious and less hard than that in the more northerly Alpine climes,

and above all the outlook on life is French, and not that money-grabbing Anglo-German-Swiss commercialism which the genuine traveller abhors. He sees less of that sort of thing here in the Pyrenees, even at Pau and Biarritz, than anywhere else in southern Europe.

At Nice, Monte Carlo, Naples, Capri, along the Italian lakes, and everywhere in French, German or Italian speaking Switzerland, one must pay! pay! pay! continually, and often for nothing. Here you pay for what you get, and then not always its full value, according to standards with which you have previously become familiar. The Pyrenees form quite the ideal mountain playground of Europe.

The Basses-Pyrénées, made up from the coherent masses of Navarre, the Basque country, Béarn, and a part of Chalosse and the Landes, contains a superficial area of seven hundred and sixty-three thousand nine hundred and ninety French acres. Its name comes naturally enough from the western end of the Pyrenean mountain chain.

Throughout, the department is watered by innumerable streams and rivulets, whose banks and beds are as reminiscent of romanticism as any waterways extant. The Adour is one of the “picture-rivers” of the world; it joins the rustling, tumbling Nive, as it rushes down by Cambo from the Spanish valleys, and forms the port of Bayonne.

The Gave de Pau commences in the high Pyrenees, in the wonderfully spectacular Cirque de Gavarnie, literally in a cascade falling nearly one thousand three hundred feet, perhaps the highest cascade known in the four quarters of the globe, or as the French say, “in the five parts of the world,” which is more quaint if less literal.

The Gave d’Oloron has its birth in the valley of the Aspe, and is a tributary of the Gave de Pau. It is what one might call pretty, but has little suggestion of the scenic splendour of the latter.

The Bidassoa is one of the world’s historic rivers. It forms the Atlantic frontier between France and Spain, and was the scene of Wellington’s celebrated “Passage of the Bidassoa” in 1813, also of a still more famous historical event which took place centuries before on the Ile des Faisans.

The Nivelle is a tiny stream which comes to light on Spanish soil, over the crest of the Pyrenees, and flows rapidly down to the sea at Saint-Jean-de-Luz, on the shores of the Gulf of Gascony.

The Ministry for the Interior in France classes all these chief rivers as *flottable* for certain classes of boats and barges through a portion of their length, and each of them as *navigable* for a few leagues from the sea.

Four great “Routes Nationales” cross the Basses-Pyrénées. They are the legitimate successors of the “Routes Royales” of monarchical days. The “Route Royale de Paris à Madrid, par Vittoria et Burgos,” the very same over which Charles Quint travelled to Paris, via Amboise, as the guest of François Premier, passes via Bayonne and Saint-Jean-de-Luz. It is a veritable historic highway throughout every league of its length.

The climate of the Basses-Pyrénées is by no means as warm as its latitude would seem to bespeak, the snow-capped Pyrenees keeping the temperature somewhat low. Pau and Luchon in the interior (as well as Bayonne and Biarritz on the coast) seem, curiously enough, to be somewhat milder than the open country between. The Pyrenees, though less overrun and less exploited than the Alps, are not an unknown world to be ventured into only by heroes and adventurers. They are what the French call a “new world” lively in aspect, infinitely varied, and as yet quite unspoiled, take them as a whole. This is a fact which makes the historical monuments and souvenirs of the region the more appealing in interest, particularly to one who has “done” the conventionally overrun resorts of the Tyrol, Egypt or Norway; and the country here is far more accessible. Furthermore the comforts of modern travel, as regards palace hotels and sleeping-cars, if less highly developed, are more to be remarked. One lives bountifully throughout the whole of the French slopes of the Pyrenees, from a table well supplied with many exotic articles of food such as truffles,

and *salaisons* of all sorts, fresh mountain lake trout, and those delightful *crouchades* and *cassoulets*, which in the more populous centres are only occasional, expensive luxuries.

Both the valleys and the mountains are equally charming and characteristic. The lowlanders and the mountaineers are two different species of man, but they both join hands in the admiration of, and devotion to their beloved country.

The soft, sloping valleys and the plains below, in the great watersheds of the Garonne, the Aude, the Nive, or the Adour, tell one story, and the *terre debout*, as the French geographers call the mountains, quite another. The contrast and juxtaposition of these two topographical aspects, the varying manners and customs of the peoples, and the picturesque framing given to the châteaux and historic sites make an undeniably appealing ensemble which the writer thinks is not equalled elsewhere in travelled Europe.

One of the chief characteristics of the chain of the Pyrenees is that it possesses numerous passages or passes at very considerable elevations, being outranked by surrounding peaks usually to the extent of a thousand metres only. These passes are not always practicable for wheeled traffic to be sure, but still they form a series of exits and entrances from and into Spain which are open to the dwellers in the high valleys of either country on foot or on donkey back. They are distinguished by various prefixes such as *puerto*, *collada*, *passo*, *hourque*, *hourquette*, *brèche*, *port*, *col*, and *passage*, but one and all answer more or less specifically to the name of a mountain pass.

The expression of “*il y a des Pyrénées*,” has been paraphrased in latter days as “*il n’y a plus de Pyrénées*.” A Spanish aeronaut has recently crossed the crest of the range in a balloon, from Pau to Grenada – seven hundred and thirty kilometres as the birds fly. This intrepid sportsman, in his balloon “*El Cierzo*,” crossed the divide in the dead of night, at an elevation varying between two thousand three hundred and two thousand nine hundred metres, somewhere between the Pic d’Anie and the Pic du Midi d’Ossau. In these days when automobiles beat express trains, and motor-boats beat steamships for speed, this crossing of the Pyrenees by balloon stands unique in the annals of sport.

The crossing of the Pyrenees has already resolved itself into a momentous economic question. Half a dozen roads fit for carriage traffic, and two gateways by which pass the railways of the east and west coasts, are the sole practicable means of communication between France and Spain.

The chain of the Pyrenees from west to east presents nearly a uniform height; its simplicity and uniformity is remarkable. It is a veritable wall.

To-day the Parisian journals are all printing scare-heads, reading, “*Plus de Pyrénées*” and announcing railway projects which will bring Paris and Madrid within twenty hours of each other, and Paris and Algiers within forty. New tunnels, or *ports*, to the extent of five in place of two, are to be opened, and if balloons or air-ships don’t come to supersede railways there will be a net-work of iron rails throughout the upper valleys of the Pyrenees as there are in Switzerland.

The *ville d’eaux*, or watering-places, of the Pyrenees date from prehistoric times. At Ax-les-Thermes there has recently been discovered a tank buried under three metres of alluvial soil, and dating from the bronze age.

Old maps of these parts show that the baths and waters of the region were widely known in mediæval times. It was not, however, until the reign of Louis XV that the “stations” took on that popular development brought about by the sovereigns and their courts who frequented them.

Not all of these can be indicated or described here but the accompanying map indicates them and their locations plainly enough.

Nearly every malady, real or imaginary (and there have been many imaginary ones here, that have undergone a cure), can be benefited by the waters of the Pyrenees. Only a specialist could prescribe though.

In point of popularity as resorts the baths and springs of the Pyrenees rank about as follows: Eaux-Bonnes, Eaux-Chaudes, Cauterets, St. Sauveur, Barèges, Bagnères de Bigorre, Luchon, Salies de Béarn, Ussat, Ax-les-Thermes, Vernet and Amélie les Bains.

Whatever the efficacy of their waters may be, one and all may be classed as resorts where “all the attractions” – as the posters announce – of similar places elsewhere may be found, – great and expensive hotels, tea shops, theatres, golf, tennis and “the game.” If the waters don’t cure, one is sure to have been amused, if not edified. The watering-places of the Pyrenees may not possess establishments or bath houses as grand or notorious as those of Vichy, Aix, or Homburg, and their attendant amusements of sport and high stakes and cards may not be the chief reason they are patronized, but all the same they are very popular little resorts, with as charming settings and delightful surroundings as any known.

At Eaux-Bonnes there are four famous springs, and at Eaux-Chaudes are six of diverse temperatures, all of them exceedingly efficacious “cures” for rheumatism. At Cambo – a new-found retreat for French painters and literary folk – are two *sources*, one sulphurous and the other ferruginous. Mostly the waters of Cambo are drunk; for bathing purposes they are always heated. Napoleon first set the pace at Cambo, but its fame was a long while becoming widespread. In 1808 the emperor proposed to erect a military hospital here, and one hundred and fifty thousand francs were actually appropriated for it, but the fall of the Empire ended that hope as it did many others. In the commune of Salies is a *source*, a *fontaine*, which gives a considerable supply of salt to be obtained through evaporation; also in the mountains neighbouring upon Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, and in the Arrondissement of Mauléon, are still other springs from which the extraction of salt is a profitable industry.

In the borders of the blue Gave de Pau, in full view of the extended horizon on one side and the lowland plain on the other, one appreciates the characteristics of the Pyrenees at their very best.

One recalls the gentle hills and vales of the Ile de France, the rude, granite slopes of Bretagne, the sublime peaks of the Savoian Alps, and all the rest of the topographic tableau of “la belle France,” but nothing seen before – nor to be seen later – excels the Pyrenees region for infinite variety. It is truly remarkable, from the grandeur of its sky-line to the winsomeness and softness of its valleys, peopled everywhere (always excepting the alien importations of the resorts) with a reminiscent civilization of the past, with little or no care for the super-refinements of more populous and progressive regions. The Pyrenees, as a whole, are still unspoiled for the serious-minded traveller. This is more than can be said of the Swiss Alps, the French Riviera, the German Rhine, or the byways of merry England.

CHAPTER IV

THE PYRENEES – THEIR HISTORY AND PEOPLES

IT may be a question as to who discovered the Pyrenees, but Louis XIV was the first exploiter thereof – writing in a literal sense – when he made the famous remark “*Il y a des Pyrénées.*” Before that, and to a certain extent even to-day, they may well be called the “*Pyrénées inconnues,*” a *terra incognita*, as the old maps marked the great desert wastes of mid-Africa. The population of the entire region known as the Pyrénées Françaises is as varied as any conglomerate population to be found elsewhere in France in an area of something less than six hundred kilometres.

The Pyrenees were ever a frontier battle-ground. At the commencement of the eleventh century things began to shape themselves north of the mountain chain, and modern France, through the *féodalité*, began to grow into a well-defined entity.

Charles Martel it was, as much as any other, who made all this possible, and indeed he began it when he broke the Saracen power which had over-run all Spain and penetrated via the Pyrenean gateways into Gaul.

The Iberians who flooded southern Gaul, and even went so far afield as Ireland, came from the southwestern peninsula through the passes of the Pyrenees. They were of a southern race, in marked distinction to the Franks and Gauls. Settling south of the Garonne they became known in succeeding generations as Aquitains and spoke a local *patois*, different even from that of the Basques whom they somewhat resembled. The Vascons, or Gascons, were descendants of this same race, though perhaps developed through a mixture of other races.

Amidst the succession of diverse dominations, one race alone came through the mill whole, unscathed and independent. These were the Basques who occupied that region best defined to-day as lying around either side of the extreme western frontier of France and Spain.

A French savant’s opinion of the status of this unique province and its people tells the story better than any improvisation that can be made. A certain M. Garat wrote in the mid-nineteenth century as follows: —

“Well sheltered in the gorges of the Pyrenees, where the Gauls, the Franks and the Saracens had never attacked their liberties, the Basques have escaped any profound judgments of that race of historians and philosophers which have dissected most of the other peoples of Europe. Rome even dared not attempt to throttle the Basques and merge them into her absorbing civilization. All around them their neighbours have changed twenty times their speech, their customs and their laws, but the Basques still show their original characters and physiognomies, scarcely dimmed by the progress of the ages.”

Certainly they are as proud and noble a race as one remarks in a round of European travel.

A Basque will always tell you if you ask him as to whether he is French or Spanish: “*Je ne suis pas Français, je suis Basque; je ne suis Espagnol, je suis Basque; ou, – tout simplement, je suis homme.*”

This is as one would expect to find it, but it is possible to come across an alien even in the country of the Basque. On interrogating a smiling peasant driving a yoke of cream-coloured oxen, he replied: “*Mais je ne suis pas Basque; je suis Périgourdin*— born at Badefols, just by the old château of Bertrand de Born the troubadour.”

One may be pardoned for a reference to the *cagots* of the Basque country, a despised race of people not unlike the cretins of the Alps. As Littré defines them they are distinctly a “people of the Pyrenees.” The race, as a numerous body, practically is extinct to-day. They lived in poor, mean cabins, far from the towns and under the protection of a seigneurial château or abbey. All intercourse with their neighbours was forbidden, and at church they occupied a space apart, had a

special holy water font, and when served with blessed bread it was thrown at them as if they were dogs, and not offered graciously.

This may have been uncharitable and unchristianlike, but the placing of separate holy water-basins in the churches was simply carrying out the principle of no intercourse between the Basques and the *cagots*, not even between those who had become, or professed to be Christians. “The loyal hand of a Basque should touch nothing that had previously been touched by a *cagot*.”

From the Basque country, through the heart of the Pyrenees, circling Béarn, Navarre and Foix, to Roussillon is a far cry, and a vast change in speech and manners.

Life in a Pyrenean village for a round of the seasons would probably cure most of the ills that flesh is heir to. It may be doubtful as to who was the real inventor of the simple life – unless it was Adam – but Jean Jacques Rousseau was astonished that people did not live more in the open air as a remedy against the too liberal taking of medicine.

“*Gouter la liberté sur la montagne immense!*” This was the dream of the poet, but it may become the reality of any who choose to try it. One remarks a certain indifference among the mountaineers of the Pyrenees for the conventions of life.

The mountaineer of the Pyrenees would rather ride a donkey than a pure bred Arab or drive an automobile. He has no use for the proverb: —

“Honourable is the riding of a horse to the rider,
But the mule is a dishonour and a donkey a disgrace.”

When one recalls the fact that there are comparatively few of the bovine race in the south of France, more particularly in Languedoc and Provence, he understands why it is that one finds the *cuisine à l’huile d’olive*— and sometimes *huile d’arachide*, which is made from peanuts, and not bad at that, at least not unhealthful.

In the Pyrenees proper, where the pasturage is rich, cattle are more numerous, and nowhere, not even in the Allier or Poitou in mid-France, will one find finer cows or oxen. Little, sure-footed donkeys, with white-gray muzzles and crosses down their backs, and great cream-coloured oxen seem to do all the work that elsewhere is done by horses. There are ponies, too, – short-haired, tiny beasts, – in the Pyrenees, and in the summer months one sees a Basque or a Béarnais horse-dealer driving his live stock (ponies only) on the hoof all over France, and making sales by the way.

The Mediterranean terminus of the Pyrenees has quite different characteristics from that of the west. Here the mountains end in a great promontory which plunges precipitately into the Mediterranean between the Spanish province of Figueras and the rich garden-spot of Roussillon, in France.

French and Spanish manners, customs and speech are here much intermingled. On one side of the frontier they are very like those on the other; only the uniforms of the officialdom made up of *douaniers*, *carabineros*, *gendarmes* and soldiers differ. The type of face and figure is the same; the usual speech is the same; and dress varies but little, if at all. “*Voilà! la fraternité Franco-Espagnole*”.

One ever-present reminder of two alien peoples throughout all Roussillon is the presence of the *châteaux-forts*, the walled towns, the watch-towers, and defences of this mountain frontier.

The chief characteristics of Roussillon, from the seacoast plain up the mountain valleys to the passes, are the château ruins, towers and moss-grown hermitages, all relics of a day of vigorous, able workmen, who built, if not for eternity, at least for centuries. In the Pyrénées-Orientales alone there are reckoned thirty-five abandoned hermitages, any one of which will awaken memories in the mind of a romantic novelist which will supply him with more background material than he can use up in a dozen mediæval romances. And if he takes one or more of these hallowed spots of

the Pyrenees for a setting he will have something quite as worthy as the overdone Italian hilltop hermitage, and a good deal fresher in a colour sense.

The strategic Pyrenean frontier, nearly six hundred kilometres, following the various twistings and turnings, has not varied in any particular since the treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659. From Cap Cerbère on the Mediterranean it runs, via the crests of the Monts Albères, up to Perthus, and then by the crests of the Pyrénées-Orientales, properly called, up to Puigmal; and traversing the Sègre, crosses the Col de la Perche and passes the Pic Nègre, separating France from the Val d'Andorre, crosses the Garonne to attain the peaks of the Pyrénées-Occidentales, and so, via the Forêt d'Iraty, and through the Pays Basque, finally comes to the banks of the Bidassoa, between Hendaye and Irun-Feuntarrabia.

The Treaty of Verdun gave the territory of France as extending up to the Pyrenees *and beyond* (to include the Comté de Barcelone), but this limit in time was rearranged to stop at the mountain barrier. The graft didn't work! Roussillon remained for long in the possession of the house of Aragon, and its people were, in the main, closely related with the Catalans over the border, but the Treaty of the Pyrenees, in 1659, definitely acquired this fine wine-growing province for the French.

The frontier of the Pyrenees is much better defended by natural means than that of the Alps. For four hundred kilometres of its length – quite two-thirds of its entirety – the passages and breaches are inaccessible to an army, or even to a carriage.

From the times of Hannibal and Charlemagne up to the wars of the Empire only the extremities have been crossed for the invasion of alien territory. It is in these situations that one finds the frontier fortresses of to-day; at Figueras and Gerone in Spain; in France at Bellegarde (Col de Perthus), Prats-de-Mollo, Mont Louis, Villefranche and Perpignan, in the east; and at Portalet, Navarrino, Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port (guarding the Col de Ronçevaux) and Bayonne in the west. Bayonne and Perpignan guard the only easily practicable routes (Paris-Madrid and Paris-Barcelona).

Hannibal and Charlemagne are the two great names of early history identified with the Pyrenees. Hannibal exploited more than one popular scenic touring ground of to-day, and for a man who is judged only by his deeds – not by his personality, for no authentic portrait of him exists, even in words – he certainly was endowed with a profound foresight. Charlemagne, warrior, lawgiver and patron of letters, predominant figure of a gloomy age, met the greatest defeat of his career in the Pyrenees, at Ronçevaux, when he advanced on Spain in 778.

Close by the Cap Cerbère, where French and Spanish territory join, is the little town and pass of Banyuls. This Col de Banyuls was, in 1793, the witness of a supreme act of patriotism. The Spaniards were biding their time to invade France via Roussillon, and made overtures to the people of the little village of Banyuls – famous to-day for its *vins de liqueur* and not much else, but at that time numbering less than a thousand souls – to join them and make the road easy. The *procureur du roi* replied simply: "*Les habitants de Banyuls étant français devaient tous mourir pour l'honneur et l'indépendance de la France.*"

Three thousand Spaniards thereupon attacked the entire forces of the little commune – men, women and children – but finding their efforts futile were forced to retire. This ended the "Battle of Banyuls," one of the "little wars" that historians have usually neglected, or overlooked, in favour of something more spectacular.

On the old "Route Royale" from Paris to Barcelona, via Perpignan, are two chefs-d'œuvre of the mediæval bridge-builder, made before the days of steel rails and wire ropes and all their attendant ugliness. These are the Pont de Perpignan over the Basse, and the Pont de Céret on the Tech, each of them spanning the stream by one single, graceful arch. The latter dates from 1336, and it is doubtful if the modern stone-mason could do his work as well as he who was responsible for this architectural treasure.

One finds a bit of superstitious ignorance once and again, even in enlightened France of to-day. It was not far from here, on the road to the Col de Banyuls, that we were asked by a peasant from what country we came. He was told by way of a joke that we were Chinese. “*Est-ce loin?*” he asked. “*Deux cents lieues!*” “*Diable! c’est une bonne distance!*” One suspects that he knew more than he was given credit for, and perhaps it was he that was doing the joking, for he said by way of parting: “*Ma foi, c’est bien triste d’être si loin de votre mère.*”

What a little land of contrasts the region of the Pyrenees is! It is all things to all men. From the low-lying valleys and sea-coast plains, as one ascends into the upper regions, it is as if one went at once into another country. Certainly no greater contrast is marked in all France than that between the Hautes-Pyrénées and the Landes for instance.

The Hautes-Pyrénées of to-day was formerly made up of Bigorre, Armagnac and the extreme southerly portion of Gascogne. Cæsar called the people Tarbelli, Bigerriones and Flussates, and Visigoths, Franks and Gascons prevailed over their destinies in turn.

In the early feudal epoch Bigorre, “the country of the four valleys,” had its own counts, but was united with Béarn in 1252, becoming a part of the patrimony which Henri Quatre brought ultimately to the crown of France.

Antiquities before the middle ages are rare in these parts, in spite of the memories remaining from Roman times. Perhaps the greatest of these are the baths and springs at Cauterets, one of them being known as the Bains des Espagnoles and the other as the Bains de Cesar. These unquestionably were developed in Roman times.

The chief architectural glory of the region is the ancient city of St. Bertrand, the capital of Comminges, the ancient *Lugdunum Convenarum* of Strabon and Pliny. Its fortifications and its remarkable cathedral place it in the ranks with Carcassonne, Aigues-Mortes and Béziers.

The manners and customs of the Bigordans of the towns (not to be confounded with the Bigoudens of Brittany) have succumbed somewhat to the importation of outside ideas by the masses who throng their baths and springs, but nevertheless their main characteristics stand out plainly.

Quite different from the Béarnais are the Bigordans, and, somewhat uncharitably, the latter have a proverb which given in their own tongue is as follows: – “*Béarnès faus et courtès.*” Neighbourly jealousy accounts for this. The Béarnais are morose, steady and commercial, the Bigordans lively, bright and active, and their sociability is famed afar.

In the open country throughout the Pyrenees, there are three classes of inhabitants, those of the mountains and high valleys, those of the slopes, and those of the plains. The first are hard-working and active, but often ignorant and superstitious; the second are more gay, less frugal and better livers than the mountaineers; and those of the plains are often downright lazy and indolent. The mendicant race, of which old writers told, has apparently disappeared. There are practically no beggars in France except gypsies, and there is no mistaking a gypsy for any other species.

In general one can say that the inhabitants of the high Pyrenees are a simple, good and generous people, and far less given to excess than many others of the heterogeneous mass which make up the population of modern France.

Simple and commodious and made of the wool of the country are the general characteristics of the costumes of these parts, as indeed they are of most mountain regions. But the distinctive feature, with the men as with the women, is the topknot coiffure. In the plains, the men wear the pancake-like *béret*, and in the high valleys a sort of a woollen bonnet – something like a Phrygian cap. With the women it is a sort of a hood of red woollen stuff, black-bordered and exceedingly picturesque. “*C’est un joli cadre pour le visage d’une jolie femme,*” said a fat commercial traveller, with an eye for pretty women, whom the writer met at a Tarbes table d’hôte.

A writer of another century, presumably untravelled, in describing the folk of the Pyrenees remarked: “The Highlanders of the Pyrenees put one in mind of Scotland; they have round, flat

caps and loose breeches.” Never mind the breeches, but the *béret* of the Basque is no more like the tam-o’-shanter of the Scot than is an anchovy like a herring.

An English traveller once remarked on the peculiar manner of transport in these parts in emphatic fashion. “With more sense than John Bull, the Pyrenean carter knows how to build and load his wagon to the best advantage,” he said. He referred to the great carts for transporting wine casks and barrels, built with the hind wheels much higher than the front ones. It’s a simple mechanical exposition of the principle that a wagon so built goes up-hill much easier.

Here in the Hautes-Pyrénées they speak the speech of Languedoc, with variations, idioms and bizarre interpolations, which may be Spanish, but sound like Arabic. At any rate it’s a beautiful, lisping *patois*, not at all like the speech of Paris, “twanged through the nose,” as the men of the Midi said of it when they went up to the capital in Revolutionary times “to help capture the king’s castle.”

The great literary light of the region was Despourrins, a poet of the eighteenth century, whose verses have found a permanent place in French literature, and whose rhymes were chanted as were those of the troubadours of centuries before.

To just how great an extent the *patois* differs from the French tongue the following verse of Despourrins will show: —

“Aci, debat aqueste peyre,
Repaüse lou plus gran de touts lou médecis,
Qui de poü d’està chens basis,
En a remplit lou cimetyre.

“Ici, sous cette pierre,
Repose le plus grand de tous les médecins,
Qui de peur d’être sans voisins
En a rempli le cimetière.”

A humourist also was this great poet!

Throughout the Pyrenean provinces, and along the shores of the Mediterranean, from Catalonia to the Bouches-du-Rhône are found the Gitanos, or the French Gypsies, who do not differ greatly from others of their tribe wherever found. This perhaps is accounted for by the fact that the shrines of their patron saint – Sara, the servant of the “Three Maries” exiled from Judea, and who settled at Les Saintes Maries-de-la-Mer – was located near the mouth of the Rhône. This same shrine is a place of pilgrimage for the gypsies of all the world, and on the twenty-fourth of May one may see sights here such as can be equalled nowhere else. Not many travellers’ itineraries have ever included a visit to this humble and lonesome little fishing village of the Bouches-du-Rhône, judging from the infrequency with which one meets written accounts.

Gypsy bands are numerous all through the Départements of the south of France, especially in Hérault and the Pyrénées-Orientales. Like most of their kind they are usually horse-traders, and perhaps horse-stealers, for their ideas of honesty and probity are not those of other men. They sometimes practise as sort of quack horse-doctors and horse and dog clippers, etc., and the women either make baskets, or, more frequently, simply beg, or “*tire les cartes*” and tell fortunes. They sing and dance and do many other things honest and dishonest to make a livelihood. Their world’s belongings are few and their wants are not great. For the most part their possessions consist only of their personal belongings, a horse, a donkey or a mule, their caravan, or *roulotte*, and a gold or silver chain or two, ear-rings in their ears, and a knife – of course a knife, for the vagabond gypsy doesn’t fight with fire-arms.

The further one goes into the French valleys of the Pyrenees the more one sees the real Gitanos of Spain, or at least of Spanish ancestry. Like all gypsy folk, they have no fixed abode,

but roam and roam and roam, though never far away from their accustomed haunts. They multiply, but are seldom cross-bred out of their race.

It's an idyllic life that the Gitano and the Romany-Chiel leads, or at least the poet would have us think so.

“Upon the road to Romany
It's stay, friend, stay!
There's lots o' love and lots o' time
To linger on the way;
Poppies for the twilight,
Roses for the noon,
It's happy goes as lucky goes
To Romany in June.”

But as the Frenchman puts it, “look to the other side of the coin.”

Brigandage is the original profession of the gypsy, though to-day the only stealing which they do is done stealthily, and not in the plain hold-up fashion. They profess a profound regard for the Catholic religion, but they practise other rites in secret, and form what one versed in French Catholicism would call a “*culte particulière*.” It is known that they baptize their newly-born children *as often as possible*— of course each time in a different place – in order that they may solicit alms in each case. Down-right begging is forbidden in France, but for such a purpose the law is lenient.

They are gross feeders, the Gitanos, and a fowl “a little high” has no terrors for them; they have even been known to eat sea-gulls, which no white man has ever had the temerity to taste. It has been said that they will eat cats and dogs and even rats, but this is doubtless another version of the Chinese fable. At any rate a mere heating of their viands in a saucepan – not by any stretch of the imagination can it be called cooking – is enough for them, and what their dishes lack in cooking is made up by liberal additions of salt, pepper, *piment* (which is tobacco or something like it), and saffron.

As to type, the French Gitanos are of that olive-brown complexion, with the glossy black hair, usually associated with the stage gypsy, rather small in stature, but well set up, strong and robust, fine eyes and features and, with respect to the young women and girls (who marry young), often of an astonishing beauty. In the course of a very few years the beauty of the women pales considerably, owing, no doubt, to their hard life, but among the men their fine physique and lively emotional features endure until well past the half-century.

The gypsies are supposedly a joyful, amiable race; sometimes they are and sometimes they are not; but looking at them all round it is not difficult to apply the verses of Béranger, beginning:

“Sorciars, bateleurs ou filous
Reste immonde
D'un ancien monde
Gais Bohémiens, d'où venez-vous.”

One other class of residents in the Pyrenees must be mentioned here, and that is the family of Ursus and their descendants.

The bears of the Pyrenees are of two sorts; the dignified *Ours des Pyrénées* is a versatile and accomplished creature. Sometimes he is a carnivorous beast, and sometimes he is a vegetarian pure and simple – one of the kind which will not even eat eggs. The latter species is more mischievous

than his terrible brother, for he forages stealthily in the night and eats wheat, buckwheat, maize, and any other breakfast-food, prepared or semi-prepared, he finds handy.

CHAPTER V

ROUSSILLON AND THE CATALANS

ROUSSILLON is a curious province. "Roussillon is a bow with two strings," say the inhabitants. The workers in the vineyards of other days are becoming fishermen, and the fishermen are becoming vineyard workers. The arts of Neptune and the wiles of Bacchus have however conspired to give a prosperity to Roussillon which many more celebrated provinces lack.

The Roussillon of other days, a feudal power in its time, with its counts and nobles, has become but a Département of latter-day France. The first historical epochs of Roussillon are but obscurely outlined, but they began when Hannibal freed the Pyrenees in 536, and in time the Romans became masters here, as elsewhere in Gaul.

Then there came three hundred years of Visigoth rule, which brought the Saracens, and, in 760, Pepin claimed Roussillon for France. Then began the domination of the counts. First they were but delegates of the king, but in time they usurped royal authority and became rulers in their own right.

Roussillon had its own particular counts, but in a way they bowed down to the king of Aragon, though indeed the kings of France up to Louis IX considered themselves suzerains. By the Treaty of Corbeil Louis IX renounced this fief in 1258 to his brother king of Aragon. At the death of James I of Aragon his states were divided among his children, and Roussillon came to the kings of Majorca. Wars within and without now caused an era of bloodshed. Jean II, attacked by the men of Navarre and of Catalonia, demanded aid of Louis XI, who sent seven hundred lances and men, and three hundred thousand gold crown pieces, which latter the men of Roussillon were obliged to repay when the war was over. Jean II, Comte de Roussillon, hedged and demanded delay, and in due course was obliged to pawn his countship as security. This the Roussillonais resented and revolt followed, when Louis XI without more ado went up against Perpignan and besieged it on two occasions before he could collect the sum total of his bill.

Charles VIII, returning from his Italian travels, in a generous frame of mind, gave back the province to the king of Aragon without demanding anything in return. Ferdinand of Aragon became in time king of Spain, by his marriage with Isabella, and Roussillon came again directly under Spanish domination.

Meantime the geographical position of Roussillon was such that it must either become a part of France or a buffer-state, or duelling ground, where both races might fight out their quarrels. Neither François I nor Louis XIII thought of anything but to acquire the province for France, and so it became a battle-ground where a continuous campaign went on for years, until, in fact, the Grand Condé, after many engagements, finally entered Perpignan and brought about the famous Treaty of the Pyrenees, signed on the Ile des Faisans at the other extremity of the great frontier mountain chain.

The antique monuments of Roussillon are not many; principally they are the Roman baths at Arles-sur-Tech, the tomb of Constant, son of Constantine, at Elne, and an old Mohammedan or Moorish mosque, afterwards serving as a Christian church, at Planes. The ancient city of Ruscino, the chief Roman settlement, has practically disappeared, a tower, called the Tor de Castel-Rossello, only remaining.

Impetuosity of manner, freedom in their social relations, and a certain egotism have ever been the distinctive traits of the Roussillonais. It was so in the olden times, and the traveller of to-day will have no difficulty in finding the same qualities. Pierre de Marca first discovered, and wrote of these traits in 1655, and his observations still hold good.

Long contact with Spain and Catalonia has naturally left its impress on Roussillon, both with respect to men and manners. The Spanish tone is disappearing in the towns, but in the open country it is as marked as ever. There one finds bull-fights, cock-fights, and wild, abandoned dancing, not to say guitar twanging, and incessant cigarette rolling and smoking, and all sorts of moral contradictions – albeit there is no very immoral sentiment or motive. These things are observed alike of the Roussillonnais and the Catalonians, just over the border.

The bull-fight is the chief joy and pride of the people. The labourer will leave his fields, the merchant his shop, and the craftsman his atelier to make one of an audience in the arena. Not in Spain itself, at Barcelona, Bilboa, Seville or Madrid is a bull-fight throned more critical or insistent than at Perpignan.

He loves immensely well to dance, too, the Roussillonnais, and he often carries it to excess. It is his national amusement, as is that of the Italian the singing of serenades beneath your window. On all great gala occasions throughout Roussillon a place is set apart for dancing, usually on the bare or paved ground in the open air, not only in the country villages but in the towns and cities as well.

The dances are most original. Ordinarily the men will dance by themselves, a species of muscular activity which they call “*lo batl*.” A *contrepas* finally brings in a mixture of women, the whole forming a *mélange* of all the gyrations of a dervish, the swirls of the Spanish dancing girl and the quicksteps of a Virginia reel.

The music of these dances is equally bizarre. A flute called *lo flaviol*, a *tamborin*, a *hautboy*, *prima* and *tenor*, and a *cornemeuse*, or *borrassa*, usually compose the orchestra, and the music is more agreeable than might be supposed.

In Roussillon the religious fêtes and ceremonies are conducted in much the flowery, ostentatious manner that they are in Spain, and not at all after the manner of the simple, devout fêtes and *pardons* of Bretagne. The Fête de Jeudi-Saint, and the Fête-Dieu in Roussillon are gorgeous indeed; sanctuaries become as theatres and tapers and incense and gay vestments and chants make the pageants as much pagan as they are Christian.

The coiffure of the women of Roussillon is a handkerchief hanging as a veil on the back of the head, and fastened by the ends beneath the chin, with a knot of black ribbon at each temple.

Their waist line is tightly drawn, and their bodice is usually laced down the front like those of the German or Tyrolean peasant maid. A short skirt, in ample and multifarious pleats, and coloured stockings finish off a costume as *unlike* anything else seen in France as it is *like* those of Catalonia in Spain.

The great Spanish cloak, or *capuchon*, is also an indispensable article of dress for the men as well as for the women.

The men wear a tall, red, liberty-cap sort of a bonnet, its top-knot hanging down to the shoulder – always to the left. A short vest and wide bodied pantaloons, joined together with yards of red sash, wound many times tightly around the waist, complete the men’s costume, all except their shoes, which are of a special variety known as *spardilles*, or *espadrilles*, another Spanish affectation.

The speech of Roussillon used to be Catalan, and now of course it is French; but in the country the older generations are apt to know much Catalan-Spanish and little French.

Just what variety of speech the Catalan tongue was has ever been a discussion with the word makers. It was not Spanish exactly as known to-day, and has been called *roman vulgaire*, *rustique*, and *provincial*, and many of its words and phrases are supposed to have come down from the barbarians or the Arabs.

In 1371 the Catalan tongue already had a poetic art, a dictionary of rhymes, and a grammar, and many inscriptions on ancient monuments in these parts (eighth, ninth and tenth centuries) were in that tongue. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the Catalan tongue possessed a written civil and maritime law, thus showing it was no bastard.

A fatality pursued everything Catalan however; its speech became Spanish, and its nationality was swallowed up in that of Castille. At any rate, as the saying goes in Roussillon, – and no one will dispute it, – “one must be a Catalan to understand Catalan.”

The Pays-de-Fenouillet, of which St. Paul was the former capital, lies in the valley of the Agly. Saint-Paul-de-Fenouillet is the present commercial capital of the region, if the title of commercial capital can be appropriately bestowed upon a small town of two thousand inhabitants. The old province, however, was swallowed up by Roussillon, which in turn has become the Département of the Pyrénées-Orientales.

The feudality of these parts centred around the Château de Fenouillet, now a miserable ruin on the road to Carcassonne, a few kilometres distant. There are some ruined, but still traceable, city walls at Saint-Paul-de-Fenouillet, but nothing else to suggest its one-time importance, save its fourteenth-century church, and the great tower of its ancient chapter-house.

Nearer Perpignan is Latour-de-France, the frontier town before Richelieu was able to annex Roussillon to his master's crown.

Latour-de-France also has the débris of a château to suggest its former greatness, but its small population of perhaps twelve hundred persons think only of the culture of the vine and the olive and have little fancy for historical monuments.

Here, and at Estagel, on the Perpignan road, the Catalan tongue is still to be heard in all its silvery picturesqueness.

Estagel is what the French call “*une jolie petite ville*,” it has that wonderful background of the Pyrenees, a frame of olive-orchards and vineyards, two thousand inhabitants, the Hotel Gary, a most excellent, though unpretentious, little hotel, and the birthplace of François Arago as its chief sight. Besides this, it has a fine old city gate and a great clock-tower which is a reminder of the Belfry of Bruges. The wines of the neighbourhood, the *macabeu* and the *malvoisie* are famous.

North of Estagel, manners and customs and the *patois* change. Everything becomes Languedocian. In France the creation of the modern departments, replacing the ancient provinces, has not levelled or changed ethnological distinctions in the least.

The low-lying, but rude, crests of the Corbières cut out the view northward from the valley of the Agly. The whole region roundabout is strewn with memories of feudal times, a château here, a tower there, but nothing of great note. The Château de Queribus, or all that is left of it, a great octagonal thirteenth-century donjon, still guards the route toward Limoux and Carcassonne, at a height of nearly seven hundred metres. In the old days this route formed a way in and out of Roussillon, but now it has grown into disuse.

Cucugnan is only found on the maps of the Etat-Major, in the Post-Office Guide, and in Daudet's “*Lettres de Mon Moulin*.” We ourselves merely recognized it as a familiar name. The “Curé de Cucugnan” was one of Daudet's heroes, and belonged to these parts. The Provençal literary folks have claimed him to be of Avignon; though it is hard to see why when Daudet specifically wrote C-u-c-u-g-n-a-n. Nevertheless, even if they did object to Daudet's slander of Tarascon, the Provençaux are willing enough to appropriate all he did as belonging to them.

The Catalan water, or wine, bottle, called the *porro*, is everywhere in evidence in Roussillon. Perhaps it is a Mediterranean specialty, for the Sicilians and the Maltese use the same thing. It's a curious affair, something like an alchemist's alembic, and you drink from its nozzle, holding it above the level of your mouth and letting the wine trickle down your throat in as ample a stream as pleases your fancy.

Those who have become accustomed to it, will drink their wine no other way, claiming it is never so sweet as when drunk from the *porro*.

“Du miel délayé dans un rayon de soleil.”

....

“Boire la vie et la santé quand on le boit c’est le vin idéal.”

Apparently every Catalan peasant’s household has one of these curious glass bottles with its long tapering spout, and when a Catalan drinks from it, pouring a stream of wine directly into his mouth, he makes a “study” and a “picture” at the same time.

A variation of the same thing is the gourd or leathern bottle of the mountaineer. It is difficult to carry a glass bottle such as the *porro* around on donkey back, and so the thing is made of leather. The neck of this is of wood, and a stopper pierced with a fine hole screws into it.

It comes in all sizes, holding from a bottleful to ten litres. The most common is a two-litre one. When you want to drink you hold the leather bag high in the air and pour a thin stream of wine into your mouth. The art is to stop neatly with a jerk, and not spill a drop. One *can* acquire the art, and it will be found an exceedingly practical way to carry drink.

It is a curious, little-known corner of Europe, where France and Spain join, at the eastern extremity of the Pyrenees, at Cap Cerbère. One read in classic legend will find some resemblance between Cap Cerbère and the terrible beast with three heads who guarded the gates of hell. There may be some justification for this, as Pomponius Mela, a Latin geographer, born however in Andalusia, wrote of a *Cervaria locus*, which he designated as the *finis Galliæ*. Then, through evolution, we have *Cervaria*, which in turn becomes the Catalan village of *Cerveia*. This is the attitude of the historians. The etymologists put it in this wise: *Cervaria*— meaning a wooded valley peopled with *cerfs* (stags). The reader may take his choice.

At any rate the Catalan Cerbère, known to-day only as the frontier French station on the line to Barcelona, has become an unlovely railway junction, of little appeal except in the story of its past.

In the twelfth century the place had already attained to prominence, and its feudal seigneur, named Rabedos, built a public edifice for civic pride, and a church which he dedicated to San Salvador.

In 1361 Guillem de Pau, a noble of the rank of *donzell*, and a member of a family famous for its exploits against the Moors, became Seigneur de Cerbère, and the one act of his life which puts him on record as a feudal lord of parts is a charter signed by him giving the fishing rights offshore from Collioure, for the distance of ten leagues, to one Pierre Huguet – for a price. Thus is recorded a very early instance of official sinning. One certainly cannot sell that which he has not got; even maritime tribunals of to-day don’t recognize anything beyond the “three mile limit.”

The seigneurs of Pau, who were Baillis de Cerbère, came thus to have a hand in the conduct of affairs in the Mediterranean, though their own bailiwick was nearer the Atlantic coast. At this time there were nine vassal chiefs of families who owed allegiance to the head. After the fourteenth century this frontier territory belonged, for a time, to the Seigneurs des Abelles, their name coming from another little feudal estate half hidden in one of the Mediterranean valleys of the Pyrenees.

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