







THE SPELL OF BRITTANY







PHOTO BY MC CAUL AND DICKSON

ANGE M. MOSHER

# THE SPELL OF BRITTANY

BY  
ANGE M. MOSHER

with an introduction by  
ANATOLE LE BRAZ

ILLUSTRATED



NEW YORK  
DUFFIELD AND COMPANY  
1920

ICG 11  
B 848 M 6

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Printed in the United States of America

OCT 21 1910  
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## FOREWORD

MENTAL and the Spiritual—so have I found my Brittany.

At the start there was the charm of a varied landscape—the hills of granite—stretches of moors—picturesque valleys watered by limpid streams—the soft atmosphere beloved by artists. It was Brittany on its topographic side.

I had met my attractive friend!

Then as I continued my travels, summer after summer, I came to know the old churches—the sculptured Calvaries, the mediæval châteaux, and the *history* of Brittany, dramatic and thrilling, revealed the traits and qualities of the race. I came to know the customs of the country, and the primitive appliances in the various industries and homely crafts, picturesque and appealing.

My friend had revealed his mental, intellectual, and artistic side.

But the *Soul* was discovered by slow degrees—as journey succeeded journey. For the Breton is reserved. Behind those many rows of buttons that adorn the embroidered gilet he is entrenched. But in the end he may be won.

The Folk Lore of any nation reveals its tempera-

ment. "As the wind of a century passes across the life of a people and—*songs* are made and *stories* are woven which tell what was felt and what was done."

"Once upon a time" each fairy tale begins, and "they say" commences the story of *something* in the life of *somebody*, in the land of *Somewhere*. While the *temperament* of a race is mirrored in its fairy tale and folk-songs, its faith and beliefs are set forth in the Legends of the Saints or heroes of the country. But the acquaintance becomes *intimate* only when we have come into the everyday life—if we share the neighbourhood experiences of a community, we make one of the little christening party at the church. We sit with the family around the Yule log on Christmas Eve. We join in the processions on Saints' days. We share the excitement and the rejoicings attending the betrothal of a young man and maiden of the parish. We take part in the marriage festivities. And when Death enters the household we participate in the sorrows of those who mourn. We make one of the little group at the "Veillée."

And thus we discover the soul of the beloved—be it friend—or be it country. Only within the last ten years have I arrived at this third and most important phase in my association with my adopted country—*la belle et douce et bonne Bretagne*.

I often wonder if it is worth while to travel in

Brittany before knowing the legends of the country and the race. A friend lately said to me: "I motored all through Brittany last summer, but I didn't know there were any legends. I wish I had known there were legends." When I learned that she had rushed through the very Forest of Brocéliande—doubtless raising a cloud of dust as she passed by the fountain of Barenton—doubtless trailing the odor of gasoline past the very tomb where Vivian lies enchanted—moreover had whisked madly past the hill of Menez-Bré, little dreaming that near its summit the ancient prophet and bard Gwenc'hlan, buried in an upright position, has been waiting through thirteen centuries, until Brittany has need of him, when he will arise from his tomb and descend from Menez-Bré to free his country.

One day in Paris, I was awaiting my turn at the ticket-office at Cook's, behind two nice elderly ladies who asked for tickets to Brittany. "For what place in Brittany?" demanded the ticket-seller. "Oh, just Brittany, we don't know the names of the places, but we want to go to Brittany." But there were no tickets for "just Brittany." How I longed to plant myself on a bench between the two dears and tell them a few legends and other things. But I was myself tied to a train and there it ended. But I have often recalled the pair and hoped that they would one day "see Carcassonne."

Perhaps these two incidents have had their part

in inspiring me to collect these legends, hoping that they may be the means of explaining to other travellers that which in the study of Brittany is the most valuable.

## INTRODUCTION

THE noble woman to whom we are indebted for the following pages, American by birth and *Bretonne* by adoption, has not only been an honour to those two countries, but to her sex and to humanity.

All those who knew her on either side of the ocean will bear witness with me that it was impossible to be in her presence, even for a few seconds, without carrying away the impression that you had communed with one whose nature was most generous and hospitable, and whose spirit was most rich and comprehensive.

It is two years now since Mrs. Ange M. Mosher has passed away, but there is not one of her many friends in whose memory she has not remained actively present, as an example and a vital principle; for her whole existence, it may be said, has been a magnificent homage to the value and beauty of life.

As for myself, I consider it a unique privilege to have known her. A short time before her death, she recalled to my mind the circumstances through which I first made her acquaintance, about twenty years ago.

The *Union régionaliste bretonne*, which

dreamed then of creating, in our American Brittany, national demonstrations analogous to those of the Welsh *Eisteddfod*, had chosen that year, for the place of their meeting, the little town of Guingamp. I went there from my home by the sea, upon one of those beautiful September days which, in this extreme western country of France, have such sweet, luminous charm—days already touched with the languor of autumn.

The afternoon meetings, to which the public was invited, were held in a kind of barn, improvised for the occasion into an assembly hall. The decorations were rather ordinary; at the end of the room a platform had been made of rough boards to take the place, as well as possible, of a stage. A large number of spectators in true Breton fashion, that is to say, with a democratic spirit, were crowding one another on the plain wooden benches borrowed from some neighbouring inn.

As I pushed my way into the room, the audience was listening spellbound to a peasant singer whom, by her voice and manner, above all by the umbrella pressed tight under her arm as an indispensable attribute to her person, I recognized from the doorway as my old friend, Marc'harit Phulup; I shall have occasion to speak of her later.

I was not long in noticing before me, near the front row of seats, the exquisitely beautiful face of a woman; it was evident that she was somewhat advanced in years, but below the waves of her sil-

very, white hair she had a look of unfading, youthful freshness. The black lace mantilla around her head, the long floating cape of black silk that descended from her shoulders to her feet, in fact her whole appearance, indicated that she was a stranger. She was small of stature, and age had visibly rounded her form, but a glance was sufficient to be attracted by her supreme air of refinement and distinction. This foreigner, of whatever nationality, was undoubtedly a notable-looking personage. I asked the poet, Le Goffic, by whose side I was sitting, who this lady could be?

"I know nothing about her," he said, "except that she is an American, and this morning, at the hotel, she expressed a desire to be allowed to follow the exercises of our reunion."

She followed them apparently with the deepest interest. Her clear, blue eyes, shining with excitement and enthusiasm, did not leave the face of Marc'harit Phulup for one instant; she did not lose any play of her physiognomy, any intonation of her voice. Unable to follow the sense of her words, which were in the Breton language, she nevertheless imbibed, so to speak, with her attentive ears, the peculiar accents of the Celtic melody to which the uncultivated voice of the ballad-singer lent a primitive, almost wild character which was the more confusing.

When Marc'harit had finished, Mrs. Mosher, not content with mere applause, wished to shake

hands with her. This was the moment that Le Goffic introduced me. I was, then, far from foreseeing the rôle that America would play in my life; like many of my compatriots, I had very vague ideas about it, and they were, for the most part, erroneous. America seemed a long way off, and neither did it have for me that mysterious attraction that distance often lends; I thought that I should never have the opportunity of going there, and I did not even have the desire to do so; in short, America remained beyond my moral as well as my physical horizon; and now, behold it suddenly revealed to me through one of its most charming incarnations! . . . I realized, later, that Mrs. Mosher was an exceptional type of woman; but, had America only produced this one, she would have the right to be proud of her creation. . . .

We passed the rest of the day together; and when I took leave of her, at the approach of evening, we had the conviction when we parted, that the words exchanged during these short hours had woven between us a woof of affection strong and durable, that neither the passage of time, nor even death itself could ever break.

The subject of our conversation may be easily divined. What else could it be if not about the Brittany we both loved so well? From one thing to another, Mrs. Mosher told how, and at what critical turn in her life she had had, according to

her own expression, "the unhopèd-for happiness of discovering Brittany." Many times afterward, she returned to this subject to give details or complete them. I wish to relate the principal incidents here; but, that which will be lacking in my recital—that which, alas! will be impossible for me to render, is the graceful manner and vivacious way she expressed her fine emotional feeling. Her language was so natural and original, so full of unusual expressions.

Mrs. Mosher married young, and soon became a widow; she was left with three daughters upon whom she lavished her whole affection, devoting herself entirely to their education, which she always esteemed the chief duty of her life. But, as children become older, their wings begin to grow; the time arrives when they aspire to fly; so, one sad day, Mrs. Mosher found herself upon the edge of an empty nest. She had hardly reached the age of full maturity; her destiny was far from being accomplished; endowed with a well-preserved constitution, she saw many long, spacious years before her; with what could she fill them usefully?

"Free now to live for myself, after having lived so long for others," she said, "I began to wonder, not without some anxiety, what would be the best usage I could make of my freedom. I did not know what to do or where to go in order to accomplish my desire; I felt as if I were lost. In such a

perplexing situation as this, every woman expects a great revelation; for some, it presents itself in one form or another, but for many it never comes; mine, however, was to be Brittany.

“My eldest daughter was then studying art in Paris. I joined her there one summer, and we were both asked to pay a visit to one of her friends, a young American, an artist like herself, whose parents had rented for the season the *Château de la Grand' Cour*, near Dinan. You must remember that I was ignorant, then, of Celtic Brittany even to its name. I know to-day that at Dinan I was still upon the threshold, only; but, nevertheless, it was there at the *Château de la Grand' Cour* that I was initiated into its existence, and that in a most unusual and unexpected way; fate sometimes works intelligently. One evening, as I was searching among the books in the library of the old Château for something to take to my room to read, my hand, by one of those providential chances, fell upon a large volume of which the size was really too important for my inclination, but its worn binding tempted me. What could it contain of such interest that it had been read so much? I carried it off, opened it, and was soon absorbed in the subject. At the same time, I had found the essential interest which was henceforth to occupy and enchant my life; I had discovered what I was to do.”

This book was: *La Bretagne* by Pitre Chevallier.

A superannuated work, perhaps, but it breathed a passionate love for the Breton-land, its ancient race, history, manners, customs and traditions. Mrs. Mosher read and re-read this book until she had well digested its contents. From this time forth, her great desire was to know the country described in the book; it haunted her continually, until she, at last, took up her staff, one day, and began to make most ardent pilgrimages through Brittany. Rarely did two consecutive summers pass without her appearance there. At regular intervals, the most humble, isolated, lost villages of Armorica saw alight from a public carriage or hired wagonette and to install herself in some little hotel of the place, a gentlewoman with a long black silk mantle, who, it was said, had come from a foreign land. But she soon ceased to be a stranger to the Breton-folk; she was so kind to everybody, and so anxious to win all hearts; as for her own, the Bretons had conquered it the very first day.

——“Yes,” it pleased her to say, “I have literally given myself to Brittany; and how graciously and delicately has Brittany welcomed the gift of myself to her! You know how many times I have gone through the country year after year, discovering a little more each time, and consequently loving it more and more! Well! not once, do you understand, have I been asked: who I am, whence I come, what I want. Oh! the wonderful discre-

tion of this race, the most aristocratic of all races, in the purest acceptation of the word! They watched me come and go without any comments, as if the event was the most natural thing to do. I came: "*Bonjour, Madame!*" I went: "*Bonsoir, Madame!*" Never a look of astonishment, never a question; while I was constantly asking them questions, and the greatest variety, too; I was always in quest of some information. I wanted to know all about the Breton people and Breton things; but, with all that, nobody took it amiss; nobody grew angry; on the contrary, it always stirred up a rivalry among them as to who could give the most information, and be the first to make it known. These men and women of the people instinctively felt that, if I were eager to know the detailed history of their past and present, it was not through the idle curiosity of a mere tourist, but through the inspiration of a more noble desire to penetrate deeply into their souls so as to make them more intimately mine. Ah! what marvelous spiritual riches they have permitted me to accumulate in that way! How can I ever repay them! They have given me a hundred-fold more than I have ever given them; but the one to whom I owe the most, the human creature who has disseminated the most poetry and novelty into my life is, as you may divine, Marguerite Philippe—old *Marc'harit. . .*"

Marc'harit Phulup! How can I describe her

in a few lines! Try to bring before your mind a poor Breton peasant with one arm maimed. She had less than ordinary intelligence, was completely lacking in education, not knowing how either to read or write, but for that very reason, perhaps, gifted with a wonderful memory. It was sufficient to sing a song before her only once, and she would retain both the air and the words. Now in Brittany they sing a great deal; during the day, in the open air in the fields; in the evening, around the fireside at the farms; and, as Marc'harit was incapable of working—that is, of using her hands to work—she earned her living, moving about from place to place, making pilgrimages from chapel to chapel for the sick who had need of the intercession of some saint to cure them (*un saint-guérisseur*) who was supposed to cure this or that malady. The occasions were not wanting, as she fulfilled her various missions to these chapels, to increase her repertoire of ballads. And so she finally arrived at the point of storing up in her memory a prodigious number of *gwerziou* and *soniou* (the two types of poetry the most common and popular among the Breton-folk). She boasted of being able to sing unceasingly for three months without repeating a single song. Perhaps she may have exaggerated a little; but it is nevertheless quite true that she had a great genius for singing these ballads—the spirit of song dwelt within her soul.

I have already related under what circumstances Mrs. Mosher heard her the first time at Guingamp. That same evening, she asked Marc'harit to go to the hotel and dine with her, and afterwards to sing for her alone in her room. From that moment, a strong, touching friendship sprang up between the poor peasant woman of Trégor and the American lady; in one of them it took the form of simple adoration, in which, however, there was no feeling of servility; in the other a complex sentiment—a mingling of protective tenderness and sincere admiration with a deep sense of gratitude.

“In Marc'harit,” said Mrs. Mosher to me, “I had the impression that I had reached, not only the spirit of Brittany, but I even went so far as the very quintessence of this spirit drawn from its source, in all its original freshness, in all its primitive purity. It was as if the entire country, the sky, the earth, the sea had started to sing in order to breathe into me the music from the depths of its soul, that mysterious and magic symphony that the tourists and the profane pass by, and will always pass by without hearing. . . . Dear, dear *Marc'harit!* . . . But what a strange relation between the American that I am, and the Breton that she was! There was no possible bond between us except the invisible one of the heart. Even the French I knew did not help me to communicate with her, as she knew, and only understood,

Breton. No means, consequently, of intercourse through language. And yet, we lived intimately together for days, weeks. We visited I don't know how many shrines. Seated side by side in one of your Breton vehicles, not any too comfortable, we jolted along, *silently*, to all appearances; but, within us, there was a long conversation going on the whole time. How often we have *conversed without saying a word to each other!* How eloquent was this silence! When Marc'harit felt that it had lasted long enough, she would turn toward me, smiling both with her lips and eyes; then, with head erect, looking fixedly into the distant space, she would suddenly begin to intone a ballad. And, for one or two hours, she would sing and sing. It appeared as though the musical spirit of the old Breton harpers, her ancestors, had brusquely awakened in her, and had taken possession of her very soul. She seemed to be made mad by the sound of her own voice, whose notes, growing gradually wilder and wilder, rang out long and loud through the solitude of the country in which we were travelling. The meaning of the Breton words escaped me, yet there was something strangely sympathetic in the mystery of their unknown syllables; the melody, the rhythm, the accent, all were apparently familiar to my ears; they evoked in me an indefinable memory of a life anterior to this, in very ancient days, where melodies like these had haunted my dreams. And I

cannot possibly give an idea of how much I was inspired by it; I had the feeling while listening to Marc'harit's song, that I was transported back to my veritable origin; I had the consciousness, as if through a miracle, of an immemorial, vertiginous past. What an infinite power of suggestion in those old, Celtic chants! I do not believe there can be found elsewhere any that are more touching or beautiful. I have hoarded up a number of them to rest me in my old age; they have supernatural virtues. Thanks to these songs, I can escape, when I choose, from the ugly features of New York; for I have only to hum one of these tunes to be taken back to Brittany,—to the land that I love.\* And now you can understand, in some measure, what my debt is to the poor Armorican peasant woman, who, in her poverty, richer than all our millionaires put together, has left me this splendid legacy."

Among the cultivated Bretons themselves, I know of no one who has gone farther than Mrs. Mosher in the comprehension of the soul of the Breton people. For proof of this assertion, I need only tell of a little episode in her relations with Marc'harit, to which a brief allusion is given by her in the course of this book. You have seen what unreserved admiration Mrs. Mosher has pro-

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\* Mrs. Mosher was by natural endowment and by education a thorough musician.

fessed for the exceptional gift of her companion in many pilgrimages. She only saw one imperfection in Marc'harit which shocked her a little; and she proposed to try and remedy the matter. Although Marc'harit had so many devotions to make, still she did not pay enough attention to physical cleanliness; it was a part of her employment to make innumerable prayers at all of the sacred fountains of her country, yet it did not occur to her to keep her hands long enough in the water to clean them. Mrs. Mosher thought that perhaps it was because she had never known the use of soap. And so one morning she asked the maid at the hotel to buy a cake of soap at a neighbouring bazaar and give it to Marc'harit as a present from her.

"Well, what did she say?" inquired Mrs. Mosher of the maid when told that the errand had been done.

"Oh! Madame, you should have heard her exclamation of delight when I gave her, with your compliments, the pretty rose-coloured cake of soap wrapped in silver paper. She said that she was never so happy in all her life."

As the hour for dinner approached, Mrs. Mosher expected to see Marc'harit appear with immaculately clean hands. Alas! they were, if possible, more doubtful than the day before. The attempt had been unsuccessful. The next few days Marc'harit promenaded around triumphantly with

the piece of soap in her apron pocket, but not once did the idea come into her mind to make use of it. And, of course, Mrs. Mosher took great care not to indicate to her more explicitly to what use she had destined the present; she was too much afraid of wounding the Breton sensitiveness of her friend; and so, perforce, she was obliged to return to the United States without obtaining the hygienic result she so much desired.

The following year, upon her return to Brittany, she invited me to go with her to pay a visit to Marc'harit. Upon a beautiful autumnal afternoon in August, we went through the land of Trégor, heavy-laden with the ripe, yellow wheat, taking the road to the hamlet of Saint Idunet where Marc'harit's thatched cottage stood in the midst of a small garden. As soon as she caught sight of us in the distance, she ran to meet us, escorted by her pet cat, who, up to the moment of our arrival, had been purring peacefully in the sun on the doorstep by her side. With great effusion, she took hold of Mrs. Mosher's arm and led her into the dark interior of the room, up to the chimney-place with grey ashes upon its hearthstone; and then, she pointed to the chimney shelf (the family altar found in all Breton homes) which was about even with our heads, and said:

*"Sellet, Itron, aze man!"* (See, Madame, it is there!)

Yes, in very fact, *it* was there between a porcelain statuette of *Notre Dame de Bon Secours* and a crucifix of box-wood mounted with copper nails; *it* was there *intact*, religiously exposed under a glass globe, the pretty little cake of rose-coloured soap wrapped with silver paper; and Marguerite fairly beamed with joy as she showed *it* to us. I looked at Mrs. Mosher; she was too much moved to articulate a word; tears filled her eyes.

"Ah! yes," she finally said to me, "this is indeed your race—the indomitable creator of idealism! You make it out of nothing; this woman of the people has turned a commonplace article of the toilet into a symbol—a relic. She has transformed a poor, casual, trivial thing into a thing of the soul, —a thing of eternity."

What Breton, may I ask, would have interpreted more surely, expressed in more happy terms, the very essence itself of Breton psychology? . . . This was to be the last visit ever made to Marguerite. A short time afterward, she rendered to God a soul as pure and white as her hands were sullied; she died as she had lived, in simple faith. The Curé of Pluzumet, the pastor of her parish, wrote to Mrs. Mosher that up to the last supreme moment she did not cease to whisper in her prayers the name of her benefactress across the sea. Mrs. Mosher, herself, has told how a monument to Marc'harit's memory was erected with a fund collected by Mrs. Mosher. Through her

thoughtful kindness, Brittany will always know where to kneel at the sepulchre of the most fervent, the most humble of her national ballad-singers.

But how many other services Mrs. Mosher has rendered to her adopted country! Had it not been for her, it is probable that one of its most noteworthy deeds—that of an heroic sailor who saved a whole fleet of ships—would have been doomed to oblivion. Browning, it is true, has celebrated this noble deed, but who reads Browning in Brittany? Mrs. Mosher, who knew her Browning by heart, never ceased to make a crusade for this great unknown Breton, Hervé Riel, until the day she obtained recognition of his bravery from the negligent citizens of his native town—a recognition which had been deferred for two centuries. It was she who, with the aid of M. Etienne Port, resuscitated the bold Croisic pilot, the valiant husband of *la belle Aurore*. Since then, his bronze statue stands upon the quay of his native town, his face ever turned toward the sea whose waves—and the lines of an English poet—were for a long time the only things that perpetuated the memory of his exploit. His zealous American admirer had the satisfaction of being present at the inaugural ceremonies of the statue erected in his honor. A year later, war was declared; Mrs. Mosher was never to see Brittany again.

During the bloody struggle of the late World

War, and even up to the hour of her death, which came, alas! before she could rejoice at the dawn of peace, her heart was always with her Bretons. Constantly she followed them in thought; on land, on sea, wherever their duty to France called them—their duty to the world; wherever they fought and fell for the salvation of the civilization of the soul, for which the Celts have ever been the true champions.

It chanced that I was sent on a mission to the United States in the latter part of the year 1917; and, at the beginning of 1918, I had the opportunity of staying several weeks in New York. Mrs. Mosher was then living with her daughter, Mrs. Wood.

“Come as often as you have a moment to spare,” she said; and I arranged to go to see her nearly every afternoon; she was then eighty years old. Did she have a presentiment then that the conversations of this winter would be the last that we would ever have together? I had, at all events, the impression that she purposely filled them with questions and confidences, as if to leave me as much as possible of herself, and to gain as much as she could from my presence. There was a secret solemnity about these hours passed together, and in spite of ourselves our words took a tone so grave that the effects of them were prolonged mysteriously, long after we had separated. Oh! those talks on Park Avenue—those talks so full of deep feel-

ing, that I had with the most intelligent and hospitable of friends! They will be present to my mind as long as I live.

I usually found Mrs. Mosher knitting socks for the soldiers; when I left New York she was knitting the three hundred and twenty-sixth pair. Of course it was natural that the first subject we discussed was the war; then, by some sudden break in the conversation we escaped into the past. Mrs. Mosher took me back with her over the years of her life; introduced me into the sanctuary of her memory; evoked the pleasures of her youth, her childhood. She told me of the liberal education she had received in her native town of Warsaw; how she rode horseback; how she learned to shoot in company with four or five brothers; how, under the guidance of her father, one of the judges of the county, she became fond of nature, music and books; how, one evening, when she was playing the piano, she suddenly discovered that she had, at the window, a singularly attentive listener in the person of a young girl of her own age, who chanced to be none other than Adelina Patti; how—but I forget myself; it is my mission to speak of Mrs. Mosher only in regard to her indissoluble connection with Brittany.

One day in February, as I crossed the threshold of her door, she handed me a copy of the *North American Review*, in which she had just read a touching incident about a young Breton of *Ile et*

*Vilaine*, by the name of Louis Malivet, then convalescing in the American Hospital at Neuilly, after having a leg and arm cut off. The nurse, who had him in charge, did not have enough words to express her praise of his resignation, his serenity, his gentleness, the unique quality of his "Breton smile."

"I want to do something for Louis Malivet," she said.

And she immediately began a correspondence with him in order to find out in what way she could be the most useful. He did not have extravagant wishes, this poor mutilated soldier of the war! His whole ambition, once out of the hospital, was to have the means of taking up again his primary studies (he was forced to leave them when he was thirteen years old to go and work in the field) and to prepare for his examinations as a teacher. Needless to say that Mrs. Mosher raised the necessary money, and now, over there, at *Ile et Vilaine*, in Brittany, there is a school-master who blesses her memory. When he wrote to thank her, she replied: "The only thing that I ask for in return, is to teach your pupils to love Brittany."

How she, herself, loved the Breton-folk! She loved them with her whole heart and soul; with a love complete and absolute, even for their defects and weaknesses. Upon more than one occasion, she could have wished that the Bretons were less Celtic; that is to say, less divided among them-

selves; and that they would not waste their time and strength in quarreling. And, no doubt, she could have wished them to be less addicted to drinking strong liquor. But Mrs. Mosher always expressed herself about these things in words full of indulgence. Her criticisms were intentionally veiled in parables. For instance, she represented herself on the way to paradise, surrounded by her dear Bretons. They were all there—those whom she had met in her earthly life. But, en route, some stopped to drink, others to quarrel, so that by the time she had reached the gates of the Celestial Abode she was alone. Saint Peter, as everyone knows, is not gifted with patience. Hardly had he opened the door, when he made a motion as if to close it again:

“I know your Bretons,” he said. “If I waited for them I should be here a week.”

“Oh! you surely would not be so hard-hearted as to leave them outside, good Saint Peter! They are such worthy folk. Of course they have their faults, that cannot be helped, for God has made them that way; but, to counterbalance these faults, how many qualities! Ask your colleague, good Saint Yves. . . .”

And so she continued talking as long as possible in order to gain time; and . . . the conclusion is that they *finally* arrived.

It was on Wednesday, February 13, 1918, that I had, with my good friend, the conversation which

was never to be followed by another. I left for Cincinnati in order to rejoin my wife, to whom Mrs. Mosher loved to apply these lines of Browning:

“A spirit, a fire, a dew.”

Upon the point of leaving behind me the apartment on Park Avenue a strange melancholy seized my heart. Mrs. Mosher, whose quick perception divined, at once, what was passing within me, said:

“Yes, it is possible that we may never meet again; but, if this happens, think of me without regret. I have been blessed during long, long years, and I will go on to the great and last adventure with that same ardent desire with which I have gone forward to meet all other experiences of my life. It is just as if I were making ready to discover another Brittany, still more enchanting, if possible,—an eternal Brittany. In truth, I will carry it *in* me. Do you remember that Queen of England who declared, when dying, that if her heart was opened after death that they would find written there the name of *Calais*?—Well, in mine, if they open it, will be found the word: *Brittany*.”

Dear, dear friend, you are no longer here among us, but a part of you will always be found in these pages, written from your dictation by one who was intimately attached to you.

This will be like your own voice breaking the

silence of the tomb so as to proclaim, better than I have been able to do, how you have felt, and understood, and loved Brittany. . . . You, the wonderful American woman that you were, to whom your second country had gratefully given the title: *Bretonne Ira Mor.*\*

ANATOLE LE BRAZ.

*New York, February 15, 1920.*

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\* "The *Bretonne* across the sea."

**THE SPELL OF BRITTANY**



# The Spell of Brittany

## CHAPTER I

### AN INTRODUCTION TO BRITTANY

IT SOMETIMES happens that after much travel in guide-book fashion one likes to search out some little nook of a continent where, jaunting about leisurely, browsing in quiet fashion, one meets people, objects and experiences more simple and naïve than those encountered in ordinary travel. And to find such a spot, quite apart, a corner of the earth where the folk-songs are still sung, the ancient language spoken, the old legends recited, where the traditional costume is worn—in short, where the people hold to the old faith, customs and traditions—this is to many a coveted pleasure. The Province of Brittany offers the possibilities, and to realize them is the object of the various journeys we are to make together.

And happy the traveller whose actual visit has been long delayed and who has done much imaginary journeying through the medium of books. When at last he visits the actual scenes he will experience a sense of familiarity and ownership.

Historians agree that the record of Brittany is

most curious and interesting. Many minds have served in the making of this record. But the real history of this as of many another corner of the earth remains to be written. Emile Souvestre has well expressed it: "Only when each fragment of a country shall have its own careful and studious historian and these fragments are joined together shall we have a really great, an entire, a perfect history. For each little corner of every province has its own intimate record; its story of a faithful priest or brave captain, its chronicle of the heroic patience and humble service of its peasants, its local tradition, its old song and legend."

The object of these chapters is to note some of these simple records, to recite some of the old ballads, recall the legends and to give a few modest impressions received during various journeys through this one little corner of France—Brittany with its five departments: Ille-et-Vilaine, Côtes-du-Nord, Finistère, Morbihan and Loire-Inférieure.

There are many reasons for giving Brittany especial place in one's affections and for choosing it as the scene of our little journeys together. Not that nature had been too prodigal in her bestowals. One finds nothing in the topography of Brittany to compare with a Niagara or a Vesuvius. There are mountains and ravines and rivers, with here and there a landscape which Virgil would not have scorned. It is a land of quartz and granite and





stretches of moor and forests which might not impress the ordinary traveller, but in these forests one hears the echoes of ancient voices, visions of fairy folk lurk in the mysterious shadows and heroes of legends are in hiding behind rocks and ancient trees. One is made aware of a peculiar presence, a touch of the marvellous, the mysterious, a magic influence. Enchanted forests and enchanted people exist in Brittany. The fairies still dance around the dolmen on moonlit nights, the dead walk in slow procession through the fields and along the roadways on the night of La Toussaint. The mystic vervaine of that early inhabitant—the Druid—has not lost its secret. All is fanciful and uncertain as if enveloped in a subtle fog. Vagueness and nebulous dreaminess pervade the atmosphere—the vagueness and nebulosity of the Middle Ages. It is an atmosphere in which giants and fairies are born and fancies and superstitions find congenial soil. Cæsar wrote that the inhabitants of this old Armorica (the ancient name of the Province) were the most superstitious of all the peoples he encountered. This influence still exists and the traveller is made aware of it. In our excursions in this country it is well to leave our twentieth-century scientific notions behind. Poor old Brittany! The X-Ray of rationalism would make havoc of the poetry and mystery and delicate vagueness which create the magic atmosphere of our Province.

Brittany has furnished rich material for poets, artists, historians and archaeologists and many of her sons and daughters have been numbered among the world's great names. The pens of Cæsar, Tacitus and Pliny the Elder have written her early history, but a yet earlier record was made when, perhaps thousands of years before the Romans came to conquer Gaul, the megalithic stones were placed in Carnac in Lower Brittany where we see them standing to-day. When and by whom were raised these mysterious monuments? No one can tell. The Arthurian legends are associated with Brittany. The "Breton Lays," translated by Ularic of France from the Keltic into French and dedicated to Henry II of England furnish proof of this.

In these little journeys together we shall visit the country of Du Guesclin, a name which is to the Breton what that of Washington is to us, William Tell to a Swiss or Garibaldi to an Italian. We shall make our pilgrimage to the grotto of Abélard and Heloise the scene of the love and tears of the unhappy pair after their flight from Paris. We shall visit the castle of that odious personage, Gille de Rais, a Breton lord of the twelfth century whose unhandsome exploits furnish the stuff of which one of the Bluebeard legends was made. At Paimpol we are to meet the fisher folk of Pierre Loti's "Pêcheurs d'Islande." At Carhaix we find the souvenirs of La Tour d'Auvergne, First Grena-

dier of France. We shall visit Guérande, the scene of Balzac's "Beatrice," and Sarzeau, birthplace of Le Sage, where, under the myrtles and fig trees of his little garden he wrote his "Gil Blas" and "Turcaret." And we shall often cross the path of Anne of Brittany, twice Queen of France. At Concarneau and Pont Aven we shall pause to note the mise-en-scene of Blanche Willis Howard's story of "Guenn." We shall see Carnac where stand the rows on rows of grey stones as they stood when Cæsar found them over two thousand years ago. And the Château des Rochers, where were written most of the "Letters" which have made the name of Madame de Sévigné famous. And Pornic and Croisic, where, during those summers after Mrs. Browning's death, the Poet sought a wilderness and where he wrote some of his best-known poems. And three places—St. Malo, La Chenaie and Tréguier associated with three great names, Chateaubriand, Félix de Lamennais and Ernest Renan.

All these and many more names are associated with this our Province of France, and furnish the biographical interest of Brittany to the student of this feature of history—of human history.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORY OF BRITTANY

BEFORE getting further under way it is a duty to speak of the history of Brittany. Of course, if one studies Brittany seriously one must read the six volumes of La Borderie's History of Brittany, but we give only the merest outlines. These are roughly as follows: Thousands of years before Christ, according to Jubainville, the highest authority on Keltic history, the Kelts left their mountains in the Orient and emigrated westward. In one of these great emigrations they peopled Gaul and the Westward Islands (now Great Britain). Fifteen centuries ago Rome came to conquer Gaul and while all Gaul became Gallio-Roman that province named Armorica (now Brittany) was especially under the Roman domination. When the invasion of Italy by the barbarians occurred and Rome, weakened in power, lost her prestige, its hold on Armorica relaxed. Then came the Saxons. In Armorica as in Great Britain they killed, pillaged, burned. In Great Britain, after

fierce resistance, they established themselves; in Armorica they destroyed and then abandoned it.

During the Roman domination and after the Saxon invasion most of the Armoricans had fled to Wales and Ireland, these countries being less under Saxon domination. But in the fifth century when the Saxons pressed too hard in the Islands the Kelts began, what is called in Breton history, "The Great Emigration." Seeking a new country, the nearest shores they found were old Armorica. Then began the Little Brittany, as they named it in contradistinction from the Great Britain. During three centuries ship followed ship in one long and memorable exodus, bringing men to defend and saints to guide these pilgrims in the new country. And thus the Bretons to-day greet as brothers the Kelts of Wales, Ireland, North Scotland, the Isle of Man and Cornwall.

Brittany has been theocratic under the Druids, Roman under Roman rule, feudal under her dukes and counts, a kingdom under her early monarchs and finally, when her last duchess, Anne of Brittany, became Queen of France, Brittany became a Province of that country, thus varying politically from the three thousand years before Julius Cæsar came to conquer Gaul, where he found the Druids in possession, to the French Revolution.

Cæsar was her first historian and, as poets were among her early annalists, many fables are mingled

with the history of Brittany. One genealogist under Greek influence makes Hercules coming from Africa, pass through Gaul where he married the nymph Kelto, thus giving birth to the Kelts. Another under Latin influence makes Brittany begin with the inevitable Æneas. Some Breton legends go so far back as Noah, affirming that he landed from the ark on the river Loire. Another legend dates from Paradise, holding that Eve spoke the Breton language. Upon these we must not insist, it being quite sufficient to know that the Keltic language was used by the inhabitants of our Province when Cæsar invaded Gaul. Without going back to Moses it is shown that the Breton race allies itself with the present through the Romans, hence in the study of the Breton history one must consult the "Commentaries" of the Conqueror of Gaul.

The Bretons of the Continent hated the Saxon with a hatred equal to that of the Bretons of the Islands and the two Brittanys were allies during the wars of that period. The history of the two fraternal Brittanys covers the period from the time of Cæsar's invasion of Gaul, fifty-eight years before Christ, to the fifth century of the Christian era.

The two Brittanys were the double centre of Druidism, the Great Gallic Theocracy. The domination of the Romans lasted four hundred years. The ancient history of Brittany may be



PHOTO BY FRANCES N. GOSTLING

ANATOLE LE BRAZ



said to have ended with the arrival of Clovis and Christianity, when begins the mediæval history of the Province. Druidism was the serious obstacle which Christianity encountered. It resisted long in Armorica. But it finally merged into the New Faith and by degrees as an ancient historian has so well expressed it: "The clan and confederation of Druidism became Feudality; the pact of friendship of the Druid became chivalry; the assemblies of the leaders became the parliaments of the nobles; the ovates of the Druids became the sorcerers of the Middle Age; the bards were changed into popular singers, elves and fairies took the place of Druids and Druidesses; the Druidic fêtes of the lake were supplanted by fêtes of the fountain; the duels of the Druidic feasts became the tournaments of the knights."

Through all this changing from Druidism to the New Faith, the Christian fathers were wise and patient. Joseph de Maistre names the early bishops "those Christian Druids" and says of them: "They grafted the Christian Faith upon the oak of the Druid—planted the Cross upon the dolmen—the new poets did not break the harp of the ancient bards, they only changed a few of its chords."

From the fifth century until 1492, when Anne of Brittany became Queen of France, the records of the various wars are full of dramatic and romantic interests. There were wars in which Eng-

land and France strove to wipe each other out of existence—wars whose annals include the names of Jeanne d'Arc and Du Guesclin, in which Brittany, alas! was too often the battlefield of the two ambitious nations.

With these extremely slight historical suggestions let us set out upon our travels.

## CHAPTER III

### CHARTRES, VITRÉ AND LES ROCHERS

BY TAKING an eight o'clock morning train at Montparnasse station one may travel from Paris to Chartres on a summer day and be able to stop off for a few hours for a glimpse of the wonderful cathedral, still reaching Vitré by daylight—this being our first objective point in Brittany. Indeed, how can one pass through Chartres without a passing glimpse of the rare monument which inspired the poem of James Russell Lowell and furnished material for Huysman's rare book, "La Cathédrale."

While Huysman's book offers great advantages in the study of the Cathedral technically and otherwise, the traveller is even more grateful to the author of a more recently published book written by Henry Adams, entitled, "The Cathedrals of Mont. St. Michel and Chartres." In this book we realize the Virgin enthroned in the sculptured shrines of the Cathedral, and emblazoned in the jewelled glass of that marvellous East Window. As Virgin, Mother of God, Womanhood and

Motherhood have been translated and defined in a rare magnificence of repetition and detail and the people of the mediæval period were silenced in awe and adoration. Even the modern soul cannot fail to be impressed by the splendid embodiment of Woman in the Cathedral of Chartres.

Of course a serious appreciation of this glorious monument requires long visits and much study even when armed with the two books we have named. But a glimpse in passing is worth while as a beginning and the three hours spent in Chartres on our journey through Brittany serve to inspire and prepare for future experiences. Before taking our train for Vitré we lunch in the open at one of the little cafés of the town and thus take an early afternoon train.

It is sunset when our train arrives at Vitré. The hour when the walls and towers of this fine old feudal town, golden in the evening glow, are seen at their finest.

In all France there remain but three mediæval towns which have preserved their feudal aspect—Avignon in the South of France, for many years the Papal Seat—Guérande and Vitré, both in Brittany.

There is a certain little inn near the station called the "Hôtel des Voyageurs," reasonably comfortable. It has a rival over the way which bears the high-sounding title of "The Steward of Madame de Sévigné" writ large upon its front.

Whether the virtues of this personage of two centuries ago have been transmitted to his descendants we cannot say.

Vitré has but one church—old and interesting, but not important. It was formerly a priory. The façade is formed of seven gables. An exterior pulpit of the fourteenth century of pure Gothic style, placed there, tradition has it, in order to oppose the public sermons of the Calvinists uttered from an exterior pulpit of the Château near by, is worth noting, it being one of the finest examples of its kind of which there are very few in existence. The Colignys introduced Calvinism into Vitré and during the wars of the League the castle served as one of the armories of the Huguenots.

We stroll about the narrow streets. Ancient houses built upon pillared galleries, each story projecting beyond the one below, almost meeting at the summit its neighbour **over** the way, making a pell-mell of dormer-windows, sculptured cornices and chimneypots—such are numerous in medieval Vitré. And there are several interesting antiquity shops—an attractive feature to many of us!

But Vitré, interesting in itself, is not the chief object of this visit, which is to see the château of Les Rochers, the home of Madame de Sévigné, and next morning we secure a good horse, carriage and driver for the modest sum of six francs and make the excursion thither three miles from Vitré.

## CHAPTER IV

### MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ

ALTHOUGH Madame de Sévigné was born in Paris (you know the little house in the Place des Vosges), most of her short married life and her long widowhood were passed at the Château Les Rochers. It is chiefly with her associations with Brittany that we have to do. Through the vivid records in the "Letters" we see her making the journeys from Paris to Vitré, an affair of eight or nine days and thus described: "It was a veritable cavalcade," she writes, "two open carriages, seven carriage horses, two men on horseback and upon a pack-horse the bed is carried to serve at the inns en route." She took measures against dullness by choosing agreeable friends for fellow travellers and she carried along the favorite books. They talked; they read Racine and Corneille and Nicole; they enjoyed the scenery. The good uncle, the "*bien bon*" of the "Letters" always made one of the party and often her son Charles, who appears to have been a most agreeable companion.

And we note other journeys—those from Vitré back to Paris where at the court of Louis XIV at Versailles a welcome always awaited this clever and charming woman. And we accompany her on the occasional visits to her daughter in Provence and to the waters of Vichy for her recurrent rheumatism. Many an author is seen at his best in his travel notes; our châtelaine of Les Rochers is no exception. When she travels in these “Letters,” the reader vividly accompanies her.

The late Gaston Boissier of the Collège de France in his delightful sketch of the famous letter-writer says: “It is doubtless true of the ‘Letters’ of Madame de Sévigné that the most interesting thing in them is Herself.” She wrote with frankness. Most of her secrets she let slip sooner or later from the point of her pen. Her gossip charms, her frivolities enchant, her airy nothings passed around among the court circle at Versailles crystallized into *bon mots* and were held worthy to be adopted and repeated by the great Louis himself.

When the brilliant Marie de Rabutin-Chantal married the flippant Chevalier de Sévigné, of a Breton family allied to the Du Guesclins and Clissons, he was possessed of more estates than money. We learn that he esteemed but did not love his wife and that she loved but did not esteem him, most people agreeing with her in respect to the latter. We find the husband squandering his

dowry in gambling. We see him at the feet of Ninon de l'Enclos as was his father before and his son after him. For a quarter of a century later in a letter to her daughter dated 1671 the mother writes: "Your brother is under the spell of Ninon. She ruined his father." When a duel fought over a disreputable love affair takes the Chevalier off we feel little regret. During the following years she is at Les Rochers with her two children practising economies to repair the deficiencies caused by the follies of the young husband.

From time to time she flits to Paris where in 1650 she made re-entry into society. And now we associate her with that famous Hôtel de Carnavalet, still redolent with associations and souvenirs of this witty woman. And we note the more serious turn in her tastes for we find her at the Hotel Rambouillet, a Salon then at its highest point of distinction, where she met Racine, Corneille, Voiture, La Fontaine, Molière and the two tutors of her girlhood, Chapelain and Ménage. Among all these we see her the *precieuse* she indeed was, but with a preciousness free from the extravagancies of her pedantic tutors who thereby suffered ridicule in the comedy of Molière: "Les Précieuses Ridicules."

We note that in the days of the Fronde, which brought about great changes in her circle, she plays her rôle of *Frondeuse* gaily and with her accustomed success.



MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ

After the portrait by Mignard which still hangs in her bedroom  
at Les Rochers, Vitré



Through these "Letters" we meet her at the house of the Scarrons. And at the La Fayette's where she with her hostess and Rochefoucauld made a frequent and admirable trio. She is at the Saturdays of Madame Scudéry and often at the theatre. We note the episodes, so-called love affairs, in which the great Turenne and the Comte de Lude failed to win her hand. And the Prince de Conti and Fouquet were in the procession. But she turns all her lovers into staunch friends.

Then she marries her daughter, "the prettiest girl in France" (according to the mother), to a Count of Provence, and we read the wonderful mother letters that follow.

But the most attractive experiences of her life are associated with Brittany. Through the "Letters" we follow her day by day at Les Rochers. We watch her planting the avenues of trees through which we walk to-day. On October 28, 1671, she writes to her daughter: "I don't know what you have done this morning, but as for myself I have been half knee deep in the dew taking measurements. I am laying out winding avenues all around the park which will be very beautiful. If my son loves the woods and walking he will bless my memory." It is to be feared that the rather flippant Charles failed in this respect, but her memory is blessed by the visitor who rambles through these lovely avenues to-day.

And she reads. She reads all sorts of books,

grave and gay—Tasso in his own language, and Roman History (Plutarch and Josephus) and Nicole's "Treaty on Morals." Oh, how often she seems to be reading that dull book! And Pascal and Fénelon and others of the Port-Royalist group, and Virgil ("in all the majesty of the Latin," she writes), although it has been said of her Latin that it went limpingly sometimes. And with so much that is serious we welcome the arrival of the son who promptly infuses somewhat of gaiety into the group. For on these visits we catch the laugh over chapters of "Rabelais" and the "Comedies of Molière," of which the mother writes: "My son reads us many a bagatelle of which he is prince—comedies which he acts like Molière himself, poems and novels. He is most witty and amusing. He has kept us from taking up any serious reading as we had intended. When he leaves we shall resume our Nicole." And again: "Charles reads us chapters of 'Rabelais' enough to make us die of laughter."

We follow her to Vitré to the assembling of the Breton Parliament when she tells us: "The dinners are so magnificent that one dies of hunger," and she flits back to Les Rochers whence she writes: "I need to sleep, to eat, to refresh myself, to be silent." And again: "At last, my daughter, I have come back to my '*bien bon*,' my masons and carpenters, and I am transported with joy." And she rejoices like any child over the luxury of eat-

ing the huge slices of Breton bread and butter. "How much better to be here all alone than in the fracas of Vitré," she writes. One smiles at the term "fracas" applied to the dear, dead, old Vitré that one finds to-day.

From time to time occur the visits of the daughter—visits always shadowed with clouds of misunderstanding, to be followed—once separated—by repentances and self-reproaches on the part of the daughter, who seems to have been a person of strong character and little tenderness.

And we follow our châtelaine in many of those lonely walks through the avenues of the park—"All alone tête-a-tête," she puts it so characteristically. The "Letters" admit the reader to a certain intimacy. Indeed the visitor of Les Rochers to-day has the impression of having known the place before.

Within the château we see the bedroom of Madame de Sévigné, in which her portrait hangs—that painted by Mignard, coiffed à la Grècque—very décolletée—a mantle hanging in many folds from the shoulder. And the canopied bed, the book of accounts with the faithful gardener Pilois, which we find more interesting than the transcription of Virgil in her own handwriting, the powder puff, brushes and other toilet articles—all impart an intimate air to the apartment.

We find the garden as prim as when first laid out after the plans of Le Nôtre and the veritable

orange trees of two centuries ago stand in the original plan. The little chapel is quite intact with its altar, pictures, sofas, chairs and other furnishings of the period. This is the chapel so often mentioned in the "Letters," built by the "*bien bon*," the Abbé de Coulanges whose economies in the affairs of his niece seem not to have interfered with a little mania of his own for building.

But it is the park with its avenues planted by the faithful Pilois under her own eye that bring the charming proprietor of Les Rochers nearest us. These still retain the names she gave them: "The Infinite," "The Solitary," "The House of My Daughter," etc. The motto carved over the entrance of the château suggests the spirit in which the hospitalities of Les Rochers were offered by its mistress: "Blessed Liberty. Do whatever you like."

Through the "Letters" not only the château but its châtelaine becomes very real to the readers. We come to know how everyday life went on. It was in a simple quiet fashion thus described in a letter to her daughter: "We rise at eight. I often spend the hour until nine in the park breathing the fresh air of the forest. At nine the bell rings for mass. After mass we make our toilette and say good morning to one another. We gather flowers; we dine. Between dinner and five we read and write. When I go to my avenues I have my books. I plant myself wherever I like. I change places

and I change books—for one a book of devotion, for another history, and so on. At eight I hear a bell. It is for supper. After which we sit in the garden listening to the nightingales and breathing the perfume of the orange blossoms.”

Setting out for Paris she writes: “Adieu, my poor Rochers, adieu, my books, my *prie Dieu*, my dreams, my air castles, my lonely avenues, and our gay little after-suppers! Adieu! happy domain of the ‘*fa’niente*.’”

We find ourselves equally loath to leave this lovely spot, attractive not only through its own charms, but so deliciously pervaded with the atmosphere and souvenirs of one of the most fascinating women of France.

As an illustration of the influence of heredity Madame de Sévigné furnishes a notable instance, we note her two contrasting sides—the serious, the religious, and that other in which piquancy, satire, gaiety, elegance, and social charm are combined. On the one side we trace the mysticism of the grandmother, Madame de Chantal. On the other bubbles the sparkling red blood of the Rabutins. Two more opposing elements never met in the veins of mortal woman. In this conjunction we find the varied traits of Madame de Sévigné—grave and gay—tender and satirical—charming and cruel—enjoying alike “Rabelais” and “The Lives of the Saints”—*devoté* at the altar of the little chapel of Les Rochers and at Versailles gaily

leading the dance as partner of the Sun King.  
*Voilà notre Châtelaine!*

As a matter of fact many Bretons, while always appreciating her genius as letter-writer and her charm as mistress of Les Rochers, do not love Madame de Sévigné. One is not surprised at this, recalling that in more than one of the "Letters" she recounts the acts of de Chaulnes the Governor-General of Brittany, appointed by Louis XIV, who erected gibbets all over the Province and hung many hundreds of Bretons because they resisted gross injustice and held to their traditions. And these events were recorded by our letter-writer of Les Rochers without a trace of sorrow, pity or tenderness. For this reason at the recent inauguration of a statue at Vitré in honour of Madame de Sévigné, many Bretons were conspicuous by their absence.

## CHAPTER V

### RENNES. DOL AND DU GUESCLIN

WE REACH Rennes after two and a half hours of travel from Vitré. Fifteen hundred years ago Rennes was an interesting place. It was one of two Capitals of Brittany, the seat of an Archbishop, and has always been a prominent military point. Two rivers, the Ille and La Vilaine, join their waters at this point, giving the name Ille-et-Vilaine to this Department of Brittany. The upper part of the town is handsome with its Palace of Justice, Prefecture, Hôtel de Ville, and Cathedral, while the other end of the town contains the Academies, the Lyceum, the University, and the Museums. But to the traveller the few narrow, crooked streets which remain of mediæval Rennes are far more interesting. The Museums are rich and important.

Rennes is the birthplace of many well-known personages, among them Paul Féval the novelist,

the astronomer Binet, General Marbeuf, General Boulanger, the political agitator, and Rennes will long be remembered as the *mise-en-scène* of the most notable trial of the century in France—that of Captain Dreyfus. It was also the birthplace of the philosopher Descartes.

The ancestors of René Descartes had for many years worn the robe. His father was Councillor of the Parliament of Brittany and the family was one of the most aristocratic of the Province. In the year 1596, this child came into the world. His family would not have believed that through *him* their name was destined to survive and that the beginning of Modern Philosophy was to date from this Breton town. For the richly robed Councillor was unable to understand the shy, modest, studious boy, and all Rennes considered René Descartes a good-for-naught. A single day suffices for Rennes and we pursue our journey toward the coast where more real interests await us.

Our next stopping place is Dol—a queer little town, ancient and interesting. In olden time Dol stood in the heart of a mysterious forest. A legend tells us that this forest, from whose sacred oaks the Druids gathered mistletoe, was submerged by the ocean which, regardless of precedent, threatened to include the town. It was one Samson, formerly Archbishop of York, now the first Bishop of Dol, who came to the rescue. Through his prayers the waves receded, leaving the town intact. But the



PHOTO BY FRANCES N. GOSTLING

THE GREAT MENHIR OF DOL



forest was swept into the sea, parts of it attaching themselves to the Islands of Jersey and Guernsey. Many of these oaks were deposited during the transit and have been found in the sands that surround Mont St. Michel. Naturally Samson has been the favourite Saint of Dol ever since. The Cathedral bears the name of this guardian of the town and dates from the thirteenth century.

The disappearance of this druidic forest gave rise to the famous Breton Legend of the Flood, one incident of which is related thus: "As the waters increased Amel the pastor and Penhor his wife are upon the point of being submerged. At this moment of peril Amel places Penhor, holding their child in her arms, upon his head for safety. As the water still rises, Penhor places the little one upon her head. The flood mounts higher and higher until the blonde head of the child and a bit of its blue gown appear upon the surface of the water. An angel flying heavenward perceives this bit of blue and gold and says: "There's a little one belonging to me," and proceeds to lift it. She finds it difficult because attached to the little Raoul is Penhor the mother, and she, in turn, is held fast by Amel the father. The angel, smiling, drops a tear as she beholds this cluster of hearts and will not separate them."

The Cathedral of Dol, one of the most ancient in Brittany, is worthy of a visit.

From Dol we travel to Pontorson. Pontorson is

embedded in books and legends and offers little of sightseeing to-day. It tells no modern story to the traveller. It leads a humdrum life of its own, and it is probable that none of its inhabitants, save possibly the librarian and curator of the museum, has so much as heard of the soldier who, six centuries ago, was creating something of a commotion in its neighborhood. But in history Pontorson will ever be associated with the story of a Bad Boy—a Bad Breton Boy, who, contrary to all rules of ethics, and with no hatchet legend to start with, became the "Father of his Country"—the Protector of his Country. Pontorson was the field of many a bold deed of the brave Captain—Bertrand Du Guesclin.

A Picardy poet—Cuvelier—is his biographer. In the thirty thousand verses devoted to his subject, he tells us frankly that in all the country between Rennes and Dinan such a snub-nosed, swarthy, boorish and disagreeable person could not be found. He was ill-shapen and had greenish eyes. But his arms and hands were like steel, and in their lines one saw traces of good blood, such is the portrait traced in the poem. Paul Deroulède, in his play "Du Guesclin," gives a fine delineation of the brave, brusque, intrepid Captain, which rôle Coquelin interpreted to perfection, the absence of facial beauty in the great comedian doing good service in his make-up, and the piece filled the Porte St. Martin theatre in the season of '95-'96

with applauding Parisian audiences to the one hundredth representation.

It is upon the fourteenth century *trouvère*, Cuvelier, and upon Breton legends that we must rely for the story of the boy Du Guesclin. From these sources we know that Bertrand was born in 1320, and was the son of a Breton knight and noble dame. The Du Guesclin had far less fortune than lineage. So the beginnings of Bertrand were very modest if not very exemplary. He was of a surly nature, always in fights and turmoils, always striking or being struck. A nursery legend has it that when two years of age he had a way of amusing himself with a stick which made him the terror of servants and visitors. Wherever he went a troop of scapegraces followed him, quarrelsome, insolent, imitating their leader. These he would arrange in two lines and compel to fight until parents and friends came to the rescue with poultices and plasters. He took them upon thieving expeditions, selling the booty at Rennes and coming home bruised in body and with clothing torn from head to foot. He made himself odious even to his parents. One legend tells us that whenever this boy, then at the age of nine, left his father's castle the town crier and his bell warned the population of Pontorson that Bertrand Du Guesclin was abroad.

After many escapes and a six-months' imprisonment in the tower of his father's castle, he escapes and gallops off to Rennes to the house of his uncle.

Now this uncie was an old soldier and able to appreciate such an extraordinary nephew, and we find the merry pair eating and drinking, fencing and riding from morning to night. The Bretons have always been famous wrestlers. Even to-day Paris and London sporting newspapers send correspondents to the little town of Scaër in Finistère to describe and photograph the wrestling matches which take place in every August.

One Sunday there was a great wrestling match in Rennes. A hat ornamented with a hundred feathers was the prize offered to the victor. Judge of Bertrand's emotions when his aunt, to prevent his going to the match, took him to church with her to hear a sermon! Luckily for the boy she forgot to tie him to the bench as was her habit. Between two points of the sermon she looked around and he had vanished. Of course he turns up at the match, wins the prize, and wears the hundred-feathered hat home in triumph. Later when sixteen years of age, at a great tourney held in Rennes to celebrate the marriage of their duchess, we see Bertrand mounted on a fine horse winning fresh laurels. The fact of his father being among the spectators adds zest to the story.

A certain beautiful maid of noble birth among the spectators that day lost her heart to the conquering Bertrand. This was Typhaine Rageunel, who afterward became his wife. He came to be famous throughout Brittany and France for his

strength and bravery. Dinan, Pontorson and Motte-Broon have furnished popular songs in praise of him. He rose to be the greatest captain of his time, was made Constable of France, and became a close friend of his King, Charles V. At his death his body was borne through the kingdom in the midst of a population in tears, and he was buried at St. Denis among the kings of France. But Brittany claimed his heart and in the church of St. Sauveur at Dinan a cenotaph in white marble encloses this relic, above which is engraven the arms of Du Guesclin. All this and much besides we find in the thirty thousand verses of the poet who has been named: "The Homer of Du Guesclin."

But after all a single utterance of the great Breton soldier, taken from an address to his soldiers as they were about to enter upon a campaign, gives the real keynote to his character.

"Soldiers:

In whatever country you may  
 Make war do not forget what I  
 Have told you a thousand times—  
 That the clergy, the women, the  
 Children and the poor are not  
 Your enemies."

## CHAPTER VI

### FOLK-LORE AND JEANNE DE PONTORSON

WHILE we are in the country of Du Guesclin we should take note of one of its legends. For Pontorson, like every Breton town, has its legend—old tales stored away in the memory of the people, passing through many generations and repeated by the Bretons to-day. The Pontorson ballad bears the title: "The Vassal of Du Guesclin."

But before reciting this ballad let us speak for a moment of the Breton folk-lore. It is doubtless true that while History records the official deeds of a people, we must seek the old songs to know the intimate life of a race. How many historic facts also hide themselves in legendary tales. Especially is the moral truth visible through the transparent veil of the myth. Emile Souvestre says beautifully: "The wind of a century sweeps across a people and songs which tell what it saw and what it felt are born. Each song is a chapter of human life. It indicates the moral temperament of the people to which it belongs. Confided to the memory of successive generations it retains

something of each, and the philologist and folklorist find in the ensemble a foundation as easy to decipher as does the geologist the strata which he encounters."

The folk-lore of all peoples offers striking analogies, being alike the naïve expressions of the human heart. The variations are caused by the ruling characteristics of each nation, thus the expression of the southern race is passionate and proud; that of the northern people bold and warlike. The folk-songs of Germany are often child-like, naïve and poetic. When we recall the "Tales of the Thousand and One Nights," we evoke impressions of the deep, blue, starry skies, gorgeous colours and perfumes. The old songs of North Scotland are warlike, bold, sometimes touched with gentleness. As for the Breton muse it shares the simplicity of the German, the gloom of the Scandinavian and the melancholy of the Scotch. In the song: "The Vassal of Du Guesclin," as is often the case in the Breton songs, the *dénouement* is indicated in the first few lines which serve as prologue. It is composed of several short scenes which recite the adventures of Jean of Pontorson and his Captain Du Guesclin, who commanded the armed troops of Pontorson in the wars against the English. M. Villemarqué translated this ballad from the Keltic into French. We give our rendering in English which is, as are all translations, unsatisfactory, even if faithfully rendered.

## PROLOGUE

A great castle stands in the midst of a forest;  
 all around it deep water, at each corner a tower;  
 in the court of honour a pit filled with bones. And  
 the heap grows higher with every night.

\* \* \* \* \*

The drawbridge of the castle falls easily, and  
 he who enters never departs.

## SCENE I

Across the country held by the English a young  
 Knight rode swiftly.

A young Knight named Jean of Pontorson,  
 As he rode past the castle at nightfall,  
 He demanded hospitality of the chief sentinel.  
 —Dismount. Oh! Knight, dismount and enter the  
 castle,

And put your bay steed in the stable  
 Where he shall eat his fill of barley and of hay  
 While you shall sup at the table of the Lord of the  
 castle.

## SCENE II

Now as he supped at table with the armed men  
 They spake not a word to Jean of Pontorson  
 It was as if they were drunk.

But they said to the young girl:

“Mount Bégana to the guest chamber  
 And prepare the bed for this young knight our  
 guest,”

When the great bell of the castle struck the hour  
of midnight  
They led the young knight to the guest chamber.

## SCENE III

Now Jean of Pontorson was singing in his cham-  
ber,  
Singing gaily in his chamber  
As he placed his ivory hunting horn by his bed-  
side.  
But Bégana, pale and sighing, stood waiting si-  
lently.

—"Bégana, my pretty sister, tell me something,  
Why do you look at me thus and sigh?"

—"Alas! Alas! if you but knew, dear master,  
You would not sing thus gaily in the night,  
For under your pillow there is a dagger.  
The blood of the third man they have slain  
Is not yet dry upon the blade.

Oh! Knight, you are to be the fourth,  
Your silver, your gold and your arms,  
Everything except your bay steed have they taken."

## SCENE IV

Then Jean of Pontorson from under the pillow  
Drew forth a dagger. It was red with blood.

—"Bégana, dear sister, if you will but save me  
I will give you five hundred golden sous."

—"I thank you, O Knight, but answer me first  
Are you wedded? or are you not?"

—“I cannot deceive you, Bégana, my sister,  
 Only a fortnight have I been wedded.  
 But I have three brothers, they are better than I,  
 If it please your heart choose one of them.”

—“Nothing pleases my heart, neither man nor  
 gold,

Nothing pleases my heart but you, O Knight!  
 Follow me, the drawbridge will not hinder,  
 The sentry will not stop us, he is my brother.”

—Then said the knight to Bégana the maid:

“Mount, my sister, mount in the croup of my sad-  
 dle

And we'll ride to Guingamp to find my Captain,  
 We shall see by what right I should have been  
 slain.

Let us ride to Guingamp where my right royal  
 Guesclin

Besieges the walls of Pestivien.”

#### SCENE V

“Oh! People of Guingamp, I greet you,  
 I greet you in good faith. And my Lord Guesclin  
 Tell me in God's name where is he?”

—“If it is Lord Guesclin you seek,  
 You will find him in the low tower in the hall of  
 the barons.”

Then Jean of Pontorson, entering the hall,  
 Walked straightway to Lord Guesclin.

—“The grace of God be with you, my Lord Gues-  
 clin,

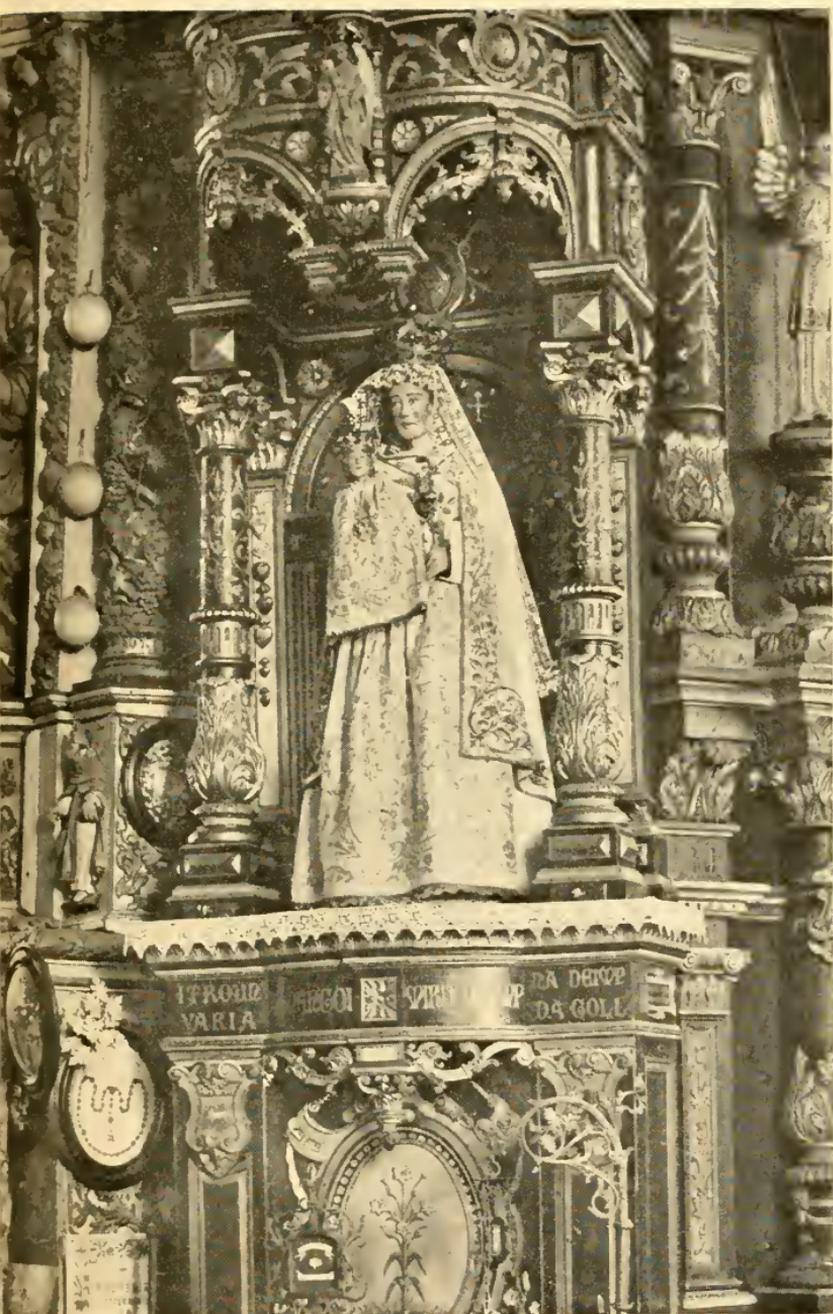


PHOTO BY FRANCES N. GOSTLING

THE VIRGIN OF RUMERGOL



God protect you. And may you protect Jean of Pontorson, your vassal."

—"The grace of God be with you also who speak thus courteously,

He whom God protects should protect others.

But what can be done for you? Tell me in few words."

—"I have need of some one who will come to the borders of Pestivien.

There are English there who oppress the people of the country——

Ravaging the country for seven leagues about,

Whoever enters there is slain without pity.

But for this young girl I also should have been slain,

I should have been slain like many another.

I have here the dagger still red with their blood."

Then Du Guesclin cried out: "By the Saints of Brittany!

So long as there shall be a live Englishman

There will be neither peace nor law.

Let them saddle my horse, let them bring me my arms and we are off."

## SCENE VI

Now the Lord of the Castle from the high tower of the battlements,

Jeering, demanded of Du Guesclin:

“Are you coming to a ball that you are thus tricked  
out,

You and your soldiers?”

—“Yes, by my faith! Lord Anglais, we are com-  
ing to a ball

But it is not to dance, it is to make others dance,  
To make you dance a jig which will not soon be  
finished,

For when we are tired the devils will take our  
place.”

At the first assault the walls trembled  
And the castle shook to its foundations.

At the second assault three towers fell  
And two hundred men were slain, then two hun-  
dred more,

At the third assault the gates were broken  
The Bretons rushed in and the castle was taken.  
The castle has been destroyed, the earth has been  
levelled.

And the laborer now passes in his cart,  
And as he passes he sings:

“Although the Englishman be a wicked traitor  
He shall not conquer Brittany so long as the stones  
of the Druids shall stand.”

The prophetic lines of this ancient ballad are  
sung to-day by the beggar minstrels of Brittany.  
Nor is Du Guesclin, Protector of Brittany, forgot-  
ten.

## CHAPTER VII

### MONT ST. MICHEL AND ITS LEGEND

STANDING boldly off the coast at the point where Brittany joins her sister Province, Normandy, rises Mont St. Michel—town, castle and monastery combined. The town at the base of the rock, the platform of the walls, the castle rising above the wall, the monastery piled above the castle—and all, as if it were glued to the enormous rock. This gigantic pile stands in an estuary of the river Couësnon, which separates the two Provinces. According to ancient chronicles both Normans and Bretons claimed the Mount and some mildly scornful verses passed to and fro. The Bretons put it thus:

“Le Couësnon dans sa folie  
A mis le Mont en Normandie.”

To which the Normans retorted:

“Si bonne n’était Normandie  
St. Michel ne s’y serait mis.”

Normandy, whether by the gentle logic of her rhymes or by more vigorous means, seems to have gained undisputed possession and to-day her only rival is the Bay of Cancale, which formerly at high tide turned the Mount into an island, while in low waters one reached the place on dry land.

An English poet has named Cancale "the blue, savage, Norman bay"—"savage" because at the equinoxial period when the tide rises, instead of gradually advancing and receding, one great wave sweeps to the base of the rock and surrounds it. And woe betide the unlucky traveller if caught in its swift course. At low tide the danger is great because of the quicksands which, for centuries, have been a terror to pilgrims and travellers. A few years ago a causeway raised to a point of safety was constructed, and to-day one may reach the Mount without peril.

Mont St. Michel was already famous in those days when brave knights rode away to the wars in the Holy Land. To-day it is valued as a monument of art and for its ecclesiastical, civil and military history. "Rock, city, stronghold, cathedral"—representing the idea of Chivalry through Charlemagne and of Christianity through St. Louis, it stands a harmonious mass of grandeur and beauty.

The journey from Pontorson to Mont St. Michel, until two years ago, was made by means of a clumsy old diligence. A tram-car, alas! now con-

veys passengers, but the ancient vehicle is often preferred—always by us. The swing of it as it rolls noiselessly along the sands provokes revery and fancy. Flocks of sheep feed on the salt marshes at our left. Our diligence plods along and now we round a curve, and suddenly, as if swung against the sky whose blue is fast turning to gold as the sun goes down, looms the mighty Mount. Its walls and towers and flying buttresses are ablaze with sunset colours, while at its base the greys and violets blend hazily into a harmonious mass, turning the solid masonry into dreamy lines of some fantastic castle.

When we enter the first gate of the town, which lies along the base of the rock, we are confronted by a bit of history in the shape of two antiquated cannon abandoned by the besieging English in 1434. We pass through a second gate, and, following the queer narrow street, find ourselves at the entrance of the most enticing of kitchens. The interior of Madame Poulard's *cuisine* offers a subject for a picture such as Teniers would have delighted to paint. Before a deep broad chimney with its roaring log fire stands our famous hostess. She has been painted by artists, sung by poets, and is known all over France as the Queen of Mont St. Michel. A double row of chickens strung upon long spits revolves slowly before the fire. They have reached that climax of colour and crispness that would tempt a saint into the sin of gluttony.

Madame Poulard, standing in the firelight, holds the handle, six feet long, of an immense frying pan in which an omelet—the famous traditional omelet of the Mount—is foaming and browning. She wears the daintiest of collars and cuffs, and a large apron protects her tidy black gown. She has never been known to lose her temper, nor has she lost her fine complexion, although for over a score of years she has roasted chickens and cooked the omelets that have made her little inn famous. The omelet, however, is not of her invention. It is to the monks of France that we owe this as many another good dish. We are told that the secret of this historic omelet has come down through centuries from the ancient kitchens of the Mount.

In this unique inn there is no bell, no office, no answering boy. The dormitories are half way up the mountain. After we have dined and taken our coffee at one of the small tables outside in the narrow street, we receive from our hostess a smiling goodnight and a small paper lantern lighted by a candle end, bearing on its exterior the legend: "Poulard." A narrow flight of stone steps brings us from the street to the top of the inner wall of the town. We cross a bastion, round an eleventh century tower, creep timidly under archways, climb other flights of stone steps, mossy and worn, and at length reach the dormitory. Each separate bedroom commands a splendid view. We look down

into the narrow street where we lately took our coffee and see other little lanterns dancing hither and thither; we look up into the mysterious arches of the monastery standing solemnly against the night sky; and we look out and away across the sand to the sea. Whether below, above or seaward, all is weird and shadowy and dreamy in the light of a young moon.

This moon has witnessed strange scenes in her time. Where the Bay of Cancale now lies shining in her light once stood oak forests wherein Druids celebrated their mysterious rites.

Next morning our coffee and rolls came up to us fresh from the hands of our hostess, after which we explore the monastery. This must be always done with a guide.

The monastery dates back to the year 704 when St. Aubert, of a rich and noble family, and archbishop of Avranches, was wont to dream and meditate in the forest of Scissy. St. Michael appeared to him in a dream and commanded him to build an edifice on the mountain in honour of him. At first St. Aubert put no faith in the vision nor did a second appearance move him. But a third manifestation convinced his doubtful mind. It was claimed by some that in the strenuousness of this last appeal the finger of the archangel made its impression upon the forehead of the saint and some ardent polemics have resulted. The question has, however, been settled for the skull of St.

Aubert treasured in a church of Avranches shows "an oblong opening in the right parietal bone large enough for a finger to enter it!"

St. Aubert constructed an edifice which was at first little more than a grotto. Finally a small temple was built and a college of twelve monks established. This little group found in St. Michael an ever faithful ally, always aiding in any dilemma by miraculous means.

Later on Pilgrimages began to take place. Every Pope sent valuable relics; every King and Emperor in Christendom went as pilgrims to the Mount, carrying rich offerings. Charlemagne added greatly to its fame. Dukes and Counts of the Province placed treasures at the feet of the statue which surmounted the temple. Mont St. Michel became a fad with popes, kings and people.

The place figures in the Song of Roland, the Epic of France. And here a Knight of the Round Table slew a horrible giant who had for seven years subsisted on young children, but by way of variety one day seized the Duchess of Brittany and carried her off to his cave on the Mount. Thus the Mount figures in legends two hundred years earlier than the period of that of St. Aubert. Poets and novelists have found rich material here. The German poet Uhland makes use of one of the best-known legends in one of his poems, which our own Longfellow expresses in part in the verses

under the title: "The Castle by the Sea." Paul Féval has written many stories in which the legends of Mont St. Michel play a part. In the eleventh century when Robert the Devil of Normandy was having his fling, his mad pranks furnished much gossip at the Mount. And the deeds of his son William the Conqueror added to its glory. The Mount makes its first and only appearance in tapestry in the story woven by the Duchess Matilda's fair hands as she sat among her maidens and illustrated the story of her gallant lord in the curious web of the Bayeux Tapestry. In one of the panels Harold is dragging two of his companions out of the treacherous quicksands. Another panel describes other disasters in crossing the sands. She places figures curiously in the drawing—a minute temple is perched on the summit of a green hillock.

As we wander through the gloomy arches seeing on one hand the dungeons—veritable holes whence prisoners were seldom brought out alive—on the other hand oubliettes—all those underground horrors which some writer has named: "the black entrails of Mont St. Michel," we are oppressed with the gloomy tales these granite blocks tell. In one of the lower vaults of the Abbey stood the "iron cage of the Cardinal." In the darkest of the dungeons many victims imprisoned by Louis XIV died of cold and hunger and gnawed by rats. Through these gloomy corridors, at one epoch of

his imprisonment, walked the "Man of the Iron Mask." It is dark, a terrible record.

The "Crypt of the Large Pillars"—twelve enormous columns, each twelve feet in circumference—excited wonder. But it is a relief to leave these dismal regions and ascend to the more cheerful "Hall of the Knights," which shows the more human side of the monastery. It is pleasant to imagine the gathering knights in mediæval times when, bent on quest or tourney, they flocked to the Mount, sure of right royal cheer, for the monks of Mont St. Michel were noted for their hospitality. What turning of spits and unearthing of old wines took place at such times! What fires must have blazed in these wide-throated chimneys inside which a score of knights might stand! What rattling of armour and clanking of spurs and greeting of brothers-in-arms ran through these spacious halls! And we wander, up and down, and outside we stand on dizzy heights. From one of the towers we admire the delicate flying buttresses. From a parapet we see the pinnacles and dainty carvings of the "*Escalier des Dentelles.*" And we find ourselves in grim company up among the gargoyles—dogs, dragons, griffins, all sorts of fantastic, impossible beasts—a solemn and silent company sternly guarding the secrets they know.

Louis XIV converted parts of the Abbey into a prison. Louis XV continued to use it in the same manner. In 1790 the monks were dispersed and

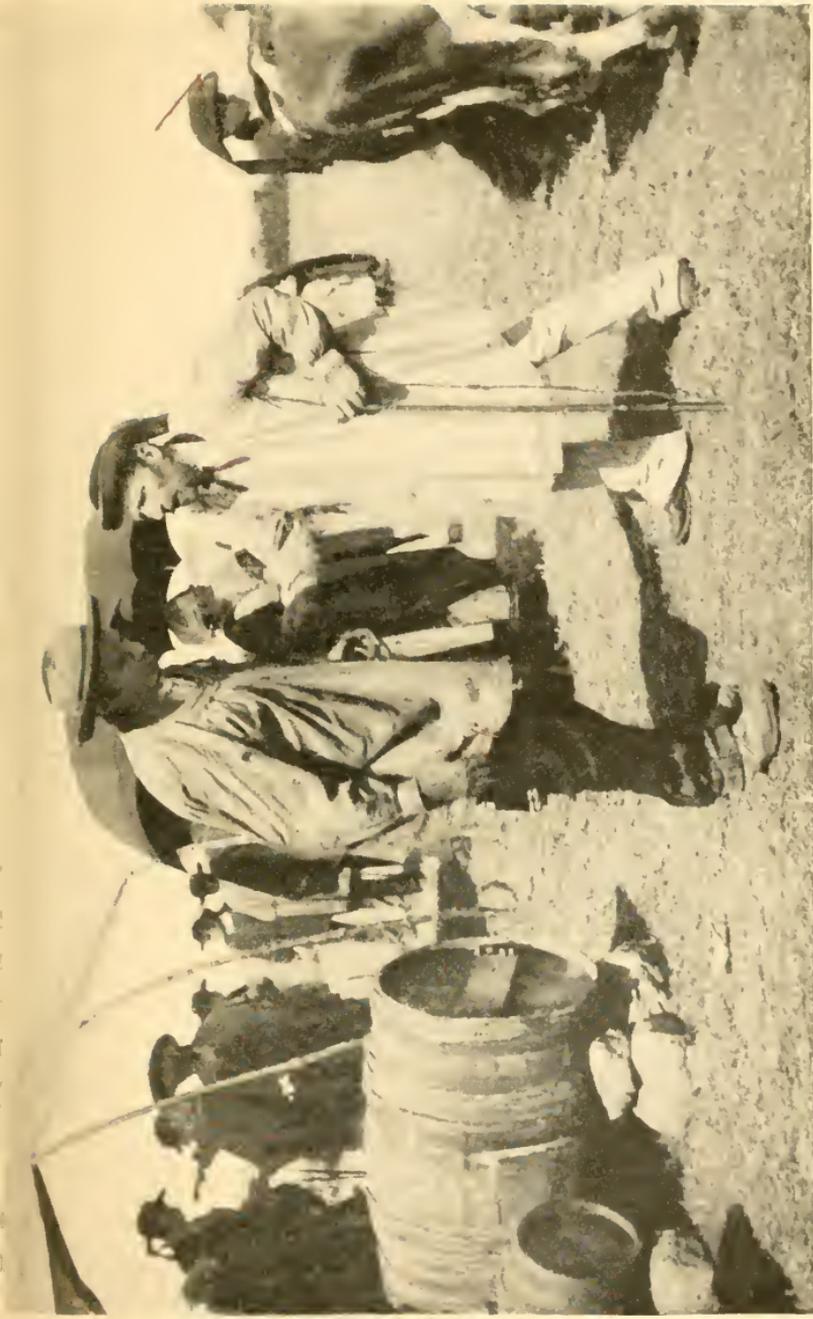


PHOTO BY FRANCES N. GOSTLING

STRIKING A BARGAIN AT A BRETON MARKET DAY



the entire Abbey was used as a prison into which the Revolutionists hustled three hundred from Avranches and Rennes. Finally the Convention converted the place into a state prison. In 1811 Napoleon made it a Capital House, and the Restoration turned it into a prison of Correction. Between 1793 and 1863, more than fourteen thousand prisoners were placed at Mont St. Michel. Many mutilations are the result of these changes. It has remained for the École des Beaux Arts of France to do justice to the value of this historic place, by purchasing it, thus restoring to France a monumental treasure alike valuable to archæologist, artist, historian and poet—to church and state.

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This description was written before the death of Madame Poulard.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ST. MALO AND CHATEAUBRIAND

OUR travels thus far have been within the limits of that Department of Brittany known as Ille-et-Vilaine. We now enter the Department of the Côtes-du-Nord. A journey of two hours by rail from Pontorson brings us to St. Malo.

St. Malo, built upon an island at the mouth of the river Rance and connected in earlier times to the Continent by a causeway, has always represented the ideal town of the mariner. It was, as it were, a huge ship anchored to the rocks. Many an adventurous sailor and explorer has hailed from this town by the sea, among them Jacques Cartier, the discoverer of Canada, and Jean Cadnec, a bold mariner, who, having landed on the island of Madagascar, so won the hearts of the natives that they made him their king. But after a few years he was seized with that homesickness which is sure to overcome the Breton absent from his Province, and he planned to return to his own country. So beloved by his subjects had he become that they

preferred him dead to absent and in order to keep him to themselves, affectionately poisoned him. Still another St. Maloin on the list of famous mariners was Duguay-Trouin. His name has taken on somewhat of the fabulous, so ubiquitous and all-conquering was he, whether the hostile fleet were English, Dutch or Spanish.

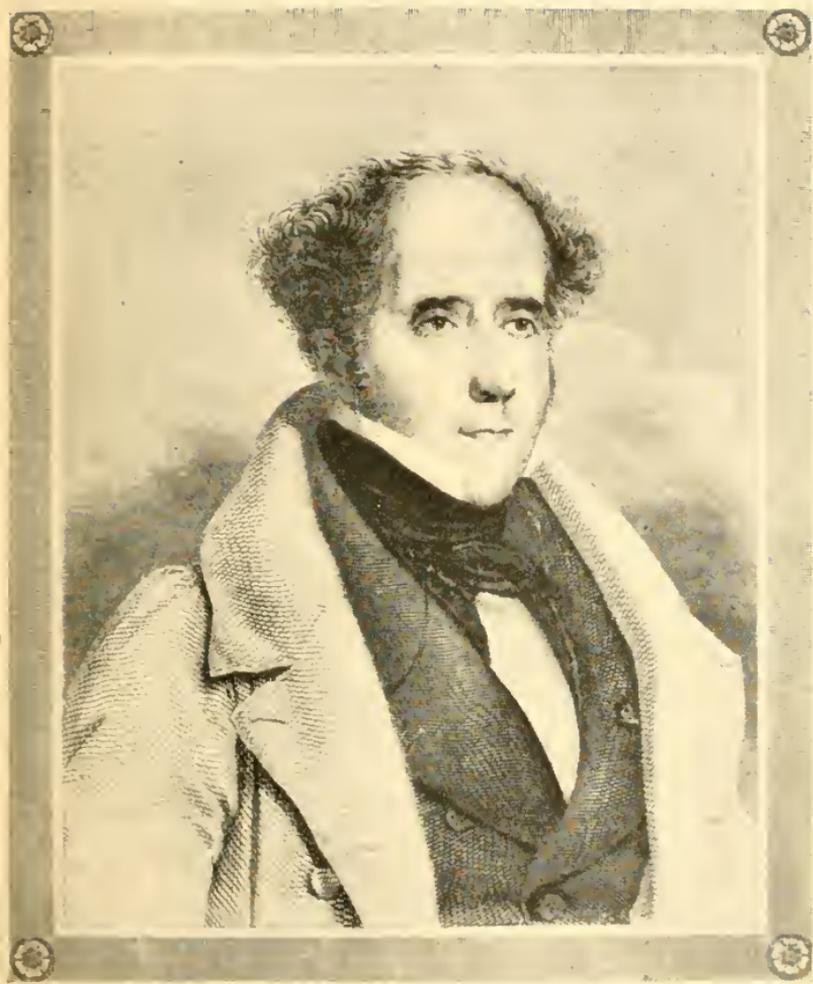
The streets of St. Malo are narrow and gloomy. But mount the ramparts and make a tour of the city. From these the view of land and sea is superb. Landward, the valley of the Rance smilingly follows the course of its river, and seaward we have a broad ocean view, with Dinard close at hand. On a granite rock which at high tide is entirely surrounded by the sea, is the tomb of Châteaubriand. The simple low cross—whether from Christian humility or from vanity of the Poet—bears no inscription indicating the name of him who is entombed within the granite rock. In a chamber of our Hôtel de France, which bears the number five, Châteaubriand was born in 1770. His name is held in great honour in St. Malo where his house and tomb are visited by travellers, his statue is on the chief public square and his portrait—that by Girondet, painted in 1809, always the favorite one—is in the museum.

Not too distant for an agreeable excursion is the Château at Combourg, where the childhood of Châteaubriand was passed. His account of that dreary château—the stern, unsympathetic, tyrannical

nical father—the timid, frightened mother—the awe-struck brother and sister sitting in the dark corner holding hands—the lonely days and nights passed by the boy in a remote attic of the château—the one ray of sunshine being the loving friendship of the sister Lucille—all these chapters are poignant—unforgettable.

The young Châteaubriand was a dreamer. But his father's plans were for practical studies. Hence he mastered his logarithms at the college of Dol, consoling himself for this drudgery by reading a good deal of Horace. From Dol to the college of Dinan, after which he was sent to Brest to study the art of naval construction. It appears that he had a habit of peering beyond the shipyard far out upon the sea. Practical studies vanished in dream's vagaries. Finding that his father's plans were likely to end in nothing, they tried the mother's—to make a priest of him. But when we follow this young Breton out into the world, it is not as priest. He is still only a dreamer.

Paris was on the verge of a Revolutionary struggle. Malesherbes, who was a family connection, took pity on the young man and sent him off upon those travels which brought him to our shores. This was in 1791. Armed with letters to General Washington, he embarks at St. Malo and lands in Baltimore, which he describes as "a pretty town, clean and animated." His impressions read to-



FRANÇOIS AUGUSTE RENÉ DE CHATEAUBRIAND  
1768-1848



day are curious and interesting. For instance he finds "Philadelphia lacking in ancient monuments, and the people have customs rather than manners—a society without ancestry and without souvenirs, but great elegance in clothing, luxury in equipage, frivolity in conversation and immorality in the banking houses."

Boston makes a happy escape. Recalling the impressions of Philadelphia, one trembles at the thought of the opinion our traveller might have had of the city on Beacon Hill. But when our explorer visits that town it is for the sole purpose of making a pilgrimage to Lexington to salute the first battlefield of American Liberty. He writes: "I have seen the Field of Lexington. Like the traveller to Thermopylae I stood there silent and reverent." He finds New York gay, crowded and commercial.

He gives his first impressions of General Washington of whom he speaks as "The Dictator." Seeing him pass in a carriage he writes: "According to my ideas Washington was nothing less than a Cincinnatus, and Cincinnatus in an ordinary carriage upset somewhat my Roman-Republic ideas. But when I took my letters of introduction to this great man I found in him the simplicity of the old Roman." We find that he was cordially received by General Washington, and, winning his way by some happy response, was invited to dinner. Long afterward, in 1822, he writes of this meeting: "I

am happy in the remembrance that his eyes have rested upon me. There is virtue in the glance of a great man."

He finds his mission as explorer rather sterile, for he had started with great ideas concerning the North-West Passage. But he conscientiously crossed the Blue Mountains, and, arriving at Chillicothe, he encounters the muse of his future romance "Natchez." And on the shores of the river Ohio he finds that the New World possesses ancient monuments. In the mounds of that region he sees the *débris* of ancient civilization. Moreover he discovers what an American sunset is like, and he paints it on future pages. And he sees Niagara, and visits the Indian Nations. But as explorer and recorder he is far more poetic and romantic than practical, and his observations yield their only harvest in his three books: "René," "Atala" and "Natchez." His temperament fitted him for the place he held in French literature—as pioneer in the Romantic School of writers in which Lamartine, Alfred de Vigny, Victor Hugo, Alfred de Musset and Béranger find their place. As years pass we see Châteaubriand in many and diverse phases. As royalist banished to the Isle of Jersey and to England, where in London in a mansard in Holborn he reads day and night books ancient and modern. We note the passing romance of Charlotte Ives—a romance that ended with the knowledge that her chevalier was already

married. For a money-marriage had been arranged for him by his family in which we find only feeble glimmers of affection late in life.

From England back to Paris, where he published his first book and frequented the teas of Madame O'Larry, where his proud and melancholy air sufficed to make him the hero of the circle. Later on we see him among other friends—Fontanes, the Delilles and the delicate and admirable Joubert, who became his affectionate admirer and at the same time his salutary critic.

The publication of his "Genius of Christianity," chancing to be coincident with the "Concordat," caused France to believe that a veritable religious renaissance had dawned. Châteaubriand suddenly found himself famous.

Then comes the friendship of Madame de Beaumont, which was a real providence to him. At her salon in the Rue Neuve-du-Luxembourg he became the central figure. Joubert thus describes the circle: "It was a modest group—the *débris* of the Terror—a tranquil intimate company gathered around a single lamp, to whom a modest glass of *eau sucrée* or of orangeade sufficed for refreshment." Later on we see him pay homage to Napoleon and accept a position in the Embassy at Rome. Madame follows him and dies there. Then came years of alternate triumph and failure, and lastly, himself forty-eight and Madame Récamier thirty-nine—from 1816 to 1848—we follow

him through the period of their friendship. He sends her a letter every morning and the invariable daily visit at three in the afternoon afforded the inhabitants of the rue de Sèvres, it is said, the means of regulating their timepieces. At the frequent receptions of Madame Récamier—the charming hostess of the *Abbaye-aux-Bois*—we listen to him in the reading of his “Memoirs,” which were the especial preoccupation of his hostess. Among the listeners we find Miss Edgeworth, Miss Berry, the Duchess of Devonshire, Benjamin Constant and Sainte-Beuve, and later on Prosper Mérimée, Toqueville, Victor Hugo and Lamartine. And then in 1848, he dies in the little house in the rue de Babylon. But always we find Châteaubriand turning towards Brittany with loyal affection. Years before his death he had chosen for his tomb this rock of St. Malo. On July fourth, of the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Châteaubriand, we joined a brilliant group of French men of letters, gathered in the old town of St. Malo. In the morning high mass in the Cathedral and a sermon by Père Olivier, the eloquent preacher of Nôtre Dame, an oration by Brunetière in the afternoon and a banquet in the evening, an immense procession in which the peasants of all the country about joined made a pilgrimage to the tomb where eminent Academicians spoke—altogether a great day for St. Malo and an honour to the name of Châteaubriand.

A few feet from the tomb of Châteaubriand we find the birthplace of another whose fame bids fair to equal that of the author of the "Genius of Christianity." But we like better to speak of Felix de Lamennais under the oaks of La Chenaïe a little later on in our travels.

## CHAPTER IX

### A FOLK-SONG OF ST. MALO

THE narrow streets of the old portion of St. Malo are gloomy because of the medieval houses which, like those we saw at Vitré, almost meet at top above the narrow streets, so that from the upper windows two people might converse in whispers. That such opportunities were not lost upon the Romeos and Juliets of the olden time is apparent from a folk-song embodying a famous legend of St. Malo.

The student of ancient Breton songs finds himself under infinite obligations to a woman. It was Marie of France who has given us many of these old songs, translated by her from the Keltic into French and dedicated to Henry II of England—lays of Tristram and Yseult, and of Parsifal. It is to her we owe the translation of this old song: "The Nightingale."

While the Breton temperament finds its most perfect expression in poems of adventure, in fantastic tales, strange combats of men and beasts of

supernatural power, tales of magic fountains and miracles, the Breton did not scorn a love song and a very human one such as we now quote.

Like the Pontorson ballad which we have given the *dénouement* is indicated at the start. We foresee the pathetic ending in the two verses which form the Prologue. Thus:

“A young wife of St. Malo was weeping yesterday  
at her dormer window,  
Alas! Alas! I am lost, my poor nightingale is  
dead.”

Then the story begins:

“Tell me, my young wife, why do you rise so often?  
So often from my side, so often from your bed at  
midnight——

Bare head and bare feet? Why do you thus rise  
at midnight?”

—“If I rise, dear lord, at midnight from my bed,  
It is because I love to see the great ships come and  
go in the bay.”

—“It is surely not for a ship that you go so often  
to the window,  
It is not for a ship, neither for two ships, nor for  
three,

It is not to watch the ships nor is it for the moon  
and stars.

Madame, tell me why every night you thus rise?”

—“I rise to watch my little baby in his cradle.”

—“Neither is it to watch a baby—to watch a baby  
sleeping,

I have no need of tales being told to me. Why do  
you thus rise?”

—“My little old man do not be anxious, I am go-  
ing to tell you,

It is the nightingale that I hear every night sing-  
ing,

Sitting on the rosebush in the garden.

It is a nightingale that I hear every night. He  
sings so sweetly,

So marvellously, so harmoniously all the night  
long,

All the night long when the sea is calm.

When the old Duke heard this he pondered in the  
depths of his heart.

When the old Duke heard this he spake thus to  
himself:

—“Whether this be true or whether it be false  
The nightingale shall be caught.”

Next morning upon rising he sought the gardener.

—“Good gardener, listen to me, there is something  
which troubles me,

There is in the thicket a nightingale,

A nightingale that does nothing but sing all the  
night long,

That sings the whole night long so loudly that it  
wakens me.

If by this very evening you shall have caught it  
I will give you a golden sou.”



THREE FISHERMEN  
After the painting by J. J. Lemordant



The gardener, having heard this, laid a little snare  
And caught the nightingale and brought it to his  
master.

And when the Duke saw it he laughed from the  
bottom of his heart.

And he strangled it and threw it in the white bosom  
of his wife.

—"Here, here, my young wife, here is your pretty  
nightingale;

It is for your sake that I have strangled it.

I dare say, my beauty, that it will give you joy."

Learning the news, the young lover at his dormer  
over the way

Said sadly: "We are suspected, my sweet one,  
and I,

And never again shall I see her at her window

At midnight in the moonlight as I was wont to do."

The thesis of this song, "The Nightingale," is quite popular with the Breton. Given an old and jealous husband, a young and beautiful wife, and an admiring young man at a distance and the cast is complete. There are three distinct Bluebeard legends in Breton folk-lore, the most thrilling of which has been wonderfully told by Leconte de Lisle in his "Poèmes Barbares," but of these later on.

A ferry crossing of fifteen minutes brings one from St. Malo to Dinard, the most fashionable sea-

shore resort in France. To heighten its attraction for Americans it is named the Newport of France. To a serious traveller in Brittany Dinard has little to say. But a charm lingers on the cliffs of St. Enogat, a mile from Dinard. Almost the first letter, perhaps the very first written by Robert Browning after the death of his wife, was addressed to his friend Lord Leighton. A sentence from this letter gives the immediate plans of the Poet thus: "I shall go to some quiet place in France to get right again—I don't mean to live with anybody, even my own family, but to occupy myself thoroughly, etc." In August—Mrs. Browning having died in June—we find him at St. Enogat. On these cliffs he used to take those long lonely walks described in his letters.

## CHAPTER X

### DINARD, DINAN AND EXCURSIONS

INSTEAD of wasting time in Dinard let us board the little steamer that plies the river Rance from St. Malo to Dinan. The valley of the Rance is a continuous scene of rocks and verdure, of sunny shores, of old manor houses and castles of feudal Brittany and gay villas of modern Brittany. For not until we reach Finistère shall we really find our unspoiled Province, although a romantic interest pervades this section through which we are travelling.

Our boat passes the tower of Solidor—"Rampared Solidor" of Browning's poem "Hervé Riel." Not until we approach Dinan do we see the château de la Bellière with its seven octagonal chimneys with capitals and pinnacles—otherwise a plain structure of granite, as melancholy as the avenue of fir-trees leading to the entrance. It was at la Bellière that Typhaine, the wife of Du Guesclin, spent the greater part of her life. Here she wrought her tapestries, prayed in her oratory, con-

ducted the affairs of her household and here she died. In her chamber we see a fine tapestry, a *prie Dieu* and a Crucifix.

Typhaine Du Guesclin had the reputation of being a clever woman. The blue stocking of her Province, it would appear—and she seems beside to have been a paragon of beauty, sweetness and devotion. She loved her rather ferocious husband from that day when she saw him as we did, an unknown competitor, enter the lists at the tournament at Rennes and win the laurels from his rivals. It was whispered about among the castles of the Rance that Typhaine was versed in the science of astrology. But perhaps her chief skill lay in divining the nature of her warrior husband and turning his prowess into generous and patriotic channels. For her biographers have called her: "The conscience of Du Guesclin." She may or may not have lingered among the chimneys of her castle to consult the constellations, but she knew how to read the heart of her lord which she believed to be just and generous. Truly the walls of La Bellière five and a half centuries ago sheltered two very exceptional personages.

Émile Souvestre has described Dinan as "corseted in antique walls, dotted with smiling little houses and embroidered with flower gardens." This description is as true as it is poetic. Such is Dinan to-day. But it is the story of the ancient Dinan town of the old dukes and counts, scene of so

many thrilling adventures of the knights of mediæval history that most interest the traveller. The town is placed boldly upon a height of a hundred and fifty feet on the left shore of the Rance and thus occupied an impregnable position in time of war. A statue of Du Guesclin on the public square marks the scene of the famous duel between him and Canterbury, fought in the presence of the most valiant knights and noble dames of Brittany and ending in the proud victory of the Breton Captain. Narrow and crooked streets with ancient houses are numerous.

The environs of Dinan claim special attention. A drive of four miles brings us to the ruins of a sixteenth century castle. Some splendid granite walls and an octagonal three-storied tower of the style of the Renaissance with beautifully carved windows are all that remain of the castle of La Garaye. But the avenue, seven hundred feet long, with its double rows of beech trees, is as beautiful now as in the days when count and countess galloped beneath its shade among the gay folk of the country and their guests. For La Garaye was noted for its hospitalities and the extravagant pursuit of pleasure on the part of its host. But misfortune came. The Lord of La Garaye became an invalid, and the Countess was crippled from a fall from her horse, after which both seemed to have been little less than saints. They went to Paris, where they studied medicine, making diseases of

the eye a specialty, and afterwards built hospitals on their estates, the ruins of which we find to-day. Here they nursed the sick among the poor of all the country about, devoting the remaining days of their lives to this occupation. The story has now become only the "Legend of La Garaye," but the roses still clamber and blossom upon the ruined tower of their castle. We gathered a handful of the loveliest, for we had learned that the burial place of the Lord and Lady of the Castle was outside a little church in the parish of Taden, a few miles distant, and we had thought of placing some of these very roses upon their tombs. This pious pilgrimage was made the next day. The little church of Taden is queer and ancient. We found the tombs—very desolate and neglected they were—in one of the angles of the outer walls of the church, the carvings so nearly obliterated that we made out the names and devices with difficulty. We laid the roses upon the two barren, dusty graves—the tribute of a passer-by, a foreigner, three hundred years after the events which had made the record of this Lord and Lady Bountiful worthy of homage.

The Honourable Mrs. Norton follows a part of the legend in one of her poems, and Mrs. Louise Chandler Moulton has written a poem with the title: "The Roses of La Garaye," in which she twines a light modern fancy about the legend.

There are other excursions to be made from

Dinan. To the Abbey of Lehon only a mile distant, and to what remains of the castle of Coëtguen. The beggars of the Côtes-du-Nord still sing an ancient ballad, "The Lady of Coëtguen," which tells the story of the beautiful Blanche of St. Malo, married to a Lord of Coëtguen; tells how she was imprisoned in the dungeon of the great tower and how she died in her gloomy prison. But space forbids the telling of all the romantic tales which cluster about the ruined castle of the Rance—tales of feudal Brittany and of her dukes and counts.

## CHAPTER XI

FELIX DE LAMENNAIS

BUT there is one excursion to be made from Dinan which lies very near the heart.

To those who sympathize with the experiences and sorrows of a man unfortunately born a century before his time—to such as appreciate the genius and the sacrifices of Felix de Lamennais, this bit of paradise where he passed the only happy years of his life becomes the shrine of a loving pilgrimage. Doubtless many of us, attracted by the charming mention made by Mr. Mathew Arnold of Maurice de Guérin, had our first glimpse of La Chenaïe from the pages of the journal and letters of this young poet of the south of France—records of the period when he was one of the group of disciples of the host of this fine old manor house. The place possesses all the beauty ascribed to it by the pen of the young poet who had shivered through the rather gloomy winter months. But it is far more valuable through its association with the Breton whose printed words

not only stirred the public of Paris, but made themselves felt at the Vatican. Here lived a man whom France scorned and whom she buried like a pauper. Sixty years later his ideas came to be, to a certain extent, those of Pope Leo XIII and of eminent sociologists. Some one has defined him as a sociologist in the Church, in other words a "Christian Socialist."

At St. Malo we saw the house in which he was born in 1782—thirteen years after Châteaubriand. But it is at La Chenaïe that we like best to meet him. Hither he was sent after the death of his parents to spend his boyhood in the charge of an uncle who was owner of this property. Although he was ten years of age and remarkably intelligent, he scarcely knew how to read. But there was a library at La Chenaïe,—a library in which there were not only books of piety for edification, but classics of Greece and Rome and the works of Voltaire, Montaigne and Rousseau, as well as books of theology and ecclesiastical history. To one analyzing the mental and moral character of Lamennais the man, the catalogue of the library in which the young Felix browsed is a factor of importance. The boy was given to escapades of various kinds and the uncle, by way of punishment, was in the habit of locking him in this library. For the sake of amusing himself, he soon learned to read. After which he devoured everything which came to hand. His passion for reading be-

came such that he used to commit some little fault in order to secure a fresh imprisonment.

In his twenties they made him priest. The world now knows the unintentional wrong done to the soul of the man who, under peculiar mental conditions which he could not master, allowed himself to be led into what proved a false step.

After a few years he is in Paris editing the newspaper *L'Avenir*, aided by Lacordaire and Montalembert, at that time his ardent disciples.

Of a nature as noble as it was sincere, ardent and visionary, Felix de Lamennais dreamed of a kind of progressive Christianity. He indicated to the Church the only course that could lead it to a reconciliation with modern nations. Every word he uttered or wrote was chivalric and disinterested. He besought the Church to separate itself from the *débris* of kings and kingdoms, and to lend itself to consider the miseries and sufferings of the people—to apply the balm of comfort. He believed in a universal transformation of Society under the influence of Catholicism. He sought to reconcile Religion and Liberty. Meanwhile he held Rome and Gregory XVI in affection. He believed the Pope could but sympathize with the aims and hopes of *L'Avenir*.

The bold doctrines of Lamennais took everybody by surprise—clerical and laity. The young clergy sympathized with him and at La Chenaïe a group of enthusiastic disciples gather. There

were Lacordaire, Montalembert, Maurice de Guérin, the Abbé Gerbert, Charles St. Foi and others. What a household it was! A lovely house on the border of the fine forest of Coëtguen, of cheerful aspect, coiffed in mansards. Opposite the house across the lawn a fine chapel; beyond a large and beautiful garden. Inside the house there were books and fine conversation; outside there were sunshine, birds and tranquillity. It was in this environment that this group of enthusiastic young men gathered about a man devoid of exterior grace, small, plain, with the ascetic look which we see in the face of Dante. But under his inspiration what studies in Art, History, Philosophy and Belles Lettres went on! Years after, Charles St. Foi wrote of him: "He had the timidity of a child; if you looked at him he was disturbed, if you praised him he was embarrassed, reduced to silence. What must one do! Listen to him as a disciple listens to a master."

Maurice de Guérin, in a letter dated 1833, writes: "In the evening after supper we gathered in the salon. He throws himself upon or rather into an immense sofa—an old piece of furniture in crimson ribbed velvet, which stands under the portrait of his grandmother, in which one notes some of the features of the grandson. It is the hour for conversation. One entering the salon at this hour will see there in the corner a head—little more than the head, the rest of the body being ab-

sorbed by the sofa—eyes shining like rubies, voice sometimes grave, sometimes ironical, and now and then bursts of shrill laughter. It is our man—it is Lamennais.”

But Rome regarded him and his newspaper with suspicion. The Pope had hitherto held him in esteem and admiration—had even designated him for the position of Cardinal. But a Sociologist within the Church was a thing not to be considered. And Rome frowned upon the newspaper and its group of collaborators. The moral situation became embarrassing to Lamennais and he decided to go to Rome and take council upon the course to pursue.

His reverence for the Pope was perfect. “And what if we are censured?” asks Montalembert en route. “We cannot be censured,” responded Lamennais, so absolute was his faith in his cause and in the Pope.

There are few journeys on record that, in the present light, seem so pathetic as this of these “three pilgrims for God and Liberty” as Lamennais, Lacordaire and Montalembert called themselves. Zola in his “Rome” has taken his Pierre Froment through paths and experiences that present many parallels to those of Felix de Lamennais. The resemblance is too striking to escape attention. Zola might have found—possibly did find—the model for the plot of his “Rome” in this episode in the life of Lamennais.

"Oh! the pitiless attitude of Rome toward this great apologist for the Church!" exclaims a French writer of our day.

Felix de Lamennais had seen in the Roman Catholic Church the predestined emancipator of nations. He had believed profoundly in his mission both social and religious. To-day he would be welcomed by the great and good man at the Vatican. Even after the death of Gregory XVI, the new Pope Pius IX sought this straying sheep and sent him a message. "Tell him I am waiting to bestow my benediction upon him and to embrace him."

It was too late. Lamennais, disillusionized, has broken with the Church and given himself to the People. His "Book of the People" and "The Past and Future of the People," written during the years spent in the prison of St. Pélagie, where he was held as a political prisoner, treat of social and civil ethics, and might safely serve as handbooks for discontented masses to-day. His book, "Words of a Believer," published after his break with the Church, produced great excitement in Paris. Sainte Beuve tells us that "even in the printing office among the typesetters the enthusiasm was so intense that the work came to a standstill." In fact this little book, scarcely more than a brochure, caused a tumult in public opinion, a chaos of ideas and sentiments. It had its reading at Rome and it was read by every blue-bloused workman in

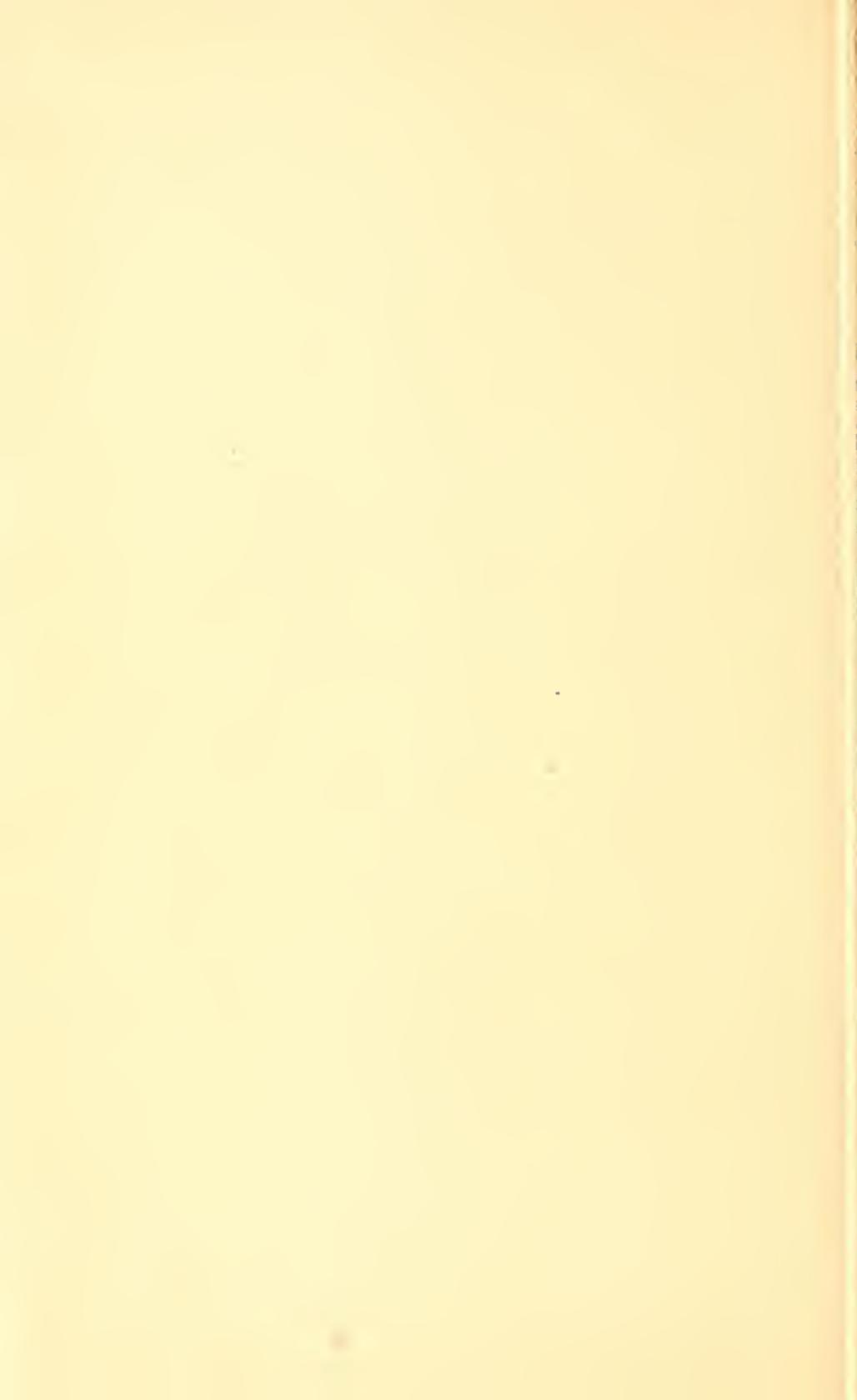
Paris. A contemporary wrote: "A priest is stirring up all Europe. What has he done? He has changed—not God, but the manner of serving Him. He has made of the Cross of Christ a standard of Liberty." Literary critics pronounced the little book a work of art—a great poem.

The French Government called it a "dangerous book." In this Jeremiah lamenting the fate of nations it saw an enemy to be feared. In order to show the real spirit and motive of this man, spurned by Rome, scorned by France, persecuted by the Government, let us read together the short preface of this so-called "dangerous book." "The Words of a Believer":

"To the people. This book has been written chiefly for you. It is to you I offer it. May it, in the midst of so many ills which are your inheritance, of so many griefs which oppress you, revive and console you. To you who are bearing the burden of the day, I would that it might be to your poor tired souls what the shade of a tree in a corner of the field at midday is to him who has toiled all the morning under the burning rays of the sun. You are living in evil times, but these times will pass. After the rigors of the winter Providence brings a more gentle season, and the little bird in its song blesses the kind hand which has brought him warmth and plenty and his mate in the warm nest. Hope on and love on. Hope softens everything and Love makes everything



THE BRITTANY COAST  
After the painting by Charles Cottet



easy. Be patient. Pray to God that he may lessen your trials. Now it is Man who judges and who punishes. Soon it will be He who will judge. Happy he who shall behold this justice. I am old. Listen to the words of an old man. The earth is dry and melancholy but it will revive. The breath of the wicked will not always pass over it like a flame which consumes. Whatever happens Providence desires that it should serve for your instruction in order that you shall know how to be good and just when your hour shall come.

“When those who have abused power shall have passed away like the *débris* in a storm, then you will understand that good alone is enduring, and you will fear to soil the air which the winds of heavens have purified. Prepare your souls for this hour, for it is not far distant. It approaches. Reform that in yourselves which needs to be reformed. Exercise yourselves in all the virtues and love one another as the Saviour of the human race has loved you, even unto death.”

Through all these years Lamennais was appreciated by the few and calumniated by the many. Intrigues sprang up on every side. Lamennais was proud in his revolt. His soul was tormented, but his heart was warm for mankind. He was indeed a Jeremiah lamenting over the fates of nations, but he did something besides. Some one has said of him: “He roared like a lion, but he wept like a mother.”

It is a relief to see him done with affairs at Rome, and in 1848, representing the democracy of Paris in the Assembly as his friend Béranger had done, even though his utterances from the Extreme Left land him in the prison of St. Pélagie.

Still more agreeable is it to note his last years, even though they were years of extreme poverty. His great love of music won him the friendship of Liszt, Chopin and George Sand. Among his friends were Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Arago and Mazzini. His pages upon Gothic Art and upon the Beautiful in Music prove him an ardent lover of the arts. His analysis of the genius of Beethoven has been pronounced a masterpiece. George Sand gives her first impressions of Lamennais whom Liszt presented to her thus: "He was small, thin, poverty-stricken, and seemed to have the merest breath of life in his body. But what a head! His clear eyes sparkled—the narrow forehead marked with vertical lines—a smiling, mobile mouth—altogether a face strongly marked for a life of renunciation and contemplation." In the character of Spiridion George Sand has delineated the traits of Lamennais as she comprehended them.

Felix de Lamennais died in poverty, thinking to the last of the people and their wrongs. At his death the people mourned their loss. But they were not permitted to follow him to his burial. The Government forestalled any possible demonstration of affection on their part by surrounding

the small procession of intimate friends with squads of policemen. He was buried in the Potters Field of Père Lachaise.

To-day France would gladly gather the ashes of this son of Brittany and raise a monument above them, but no one knows the place of his burial. A street in the quarter of the Champs Elysées bears his name; scholars, statesmen and sociologists talk and write of him and the Church accepts, to a marked degree, the doctrines for holding which he was condemned. At a meeting of the Catholic Club on the rue du Luxembourg in Paris several years ago, I heard a distinguished abbé, in closing a lecture on Felix de Lamennais, say: "In fact the Church to-day needs just such a man as Felix de Lamennais."

Sitting under the oaks of La Chenaïe, the story of his life is vividly recalled. And inside the house we find the same arrangement of rooms as described in the Journal of Maurice de Guérin. A bust of Lamennais on the mantel in the salon attests the sympathy of the occupant of the place. Otherwise there is no trace of the great mind that was once Master here. But we must seek him in his "Essays," in his "Words of a Believer," in his "Book for the People." His translation of Dante and of the "Imitations," to which he added his own "Reflections" are the only books that at any time brought him an income.

## CHAPTER XII

### GUINGAMP, PAIMPOL AND PIERRE LOTI

FROM Dinan we travel by rail to Guingamp. One visits Guingamp not only because of its historical interests, it having played an important rôle in the Hundred Years war, but also for the sake of its churches. And if possible plan to visit Guingamp at the time of the annual Pardon of Nôtre-Dame de Bon Secours, which occurs on the Saturday before the first Sunday in July. Each Pardon has its special features. In that of Guingamp the great procession takes place in the evening. It forms and sets out from the church at nine o'clock. The statue of the Virgin, one of the Black Virgins of which we shall speak in another place, was honoured by the Pope some years ago, a crown of gold being brought from Rome by a papal delegation. The Virgin adorned in this crown and clothed in a robe of cloth of gold, is borne in state, placed upon a platform, which is carried on the shoulders of ten men dressed in white. Every person in the procession—many

thousands altogether—carries a lighted candle and the effect of these moving myriads of lights is most beautiful. Every pilgrim as he marches sings the familiar Canticle of the Virgin of Guingamp.

A famous bit of old Breton music is the march of the "Men of Guingamp," who in the fourteenth century raised the siege held by the English and restored Guingamp to its rightful possessor. It is always the favourite march of the Bards all over Brittany. We march to the banquets and we march from the banquets always to the measure of this old-time tune, which is also sung to a national hymn. "Oh! Breiz Izel." Certain musicians have found in this march the theme employed by Wagner in his wedding March in *Lohengren*.

From Guingamp our travels bring us among quite another type of Breton life and character. At Paimpol, the country of Pierre Loti's "Pêcheurs d'Islande," we shall encounter the people whom we have already met in the pages of that beautiful book. But this prose poem Paimpol, smiling amid her rocks unnoticed by the traveller, even now retains much of its tranquillity and charm.

The journey from Guingamp to Paimpol is a matter of several hours and is altogether agreeable. How well we recall our first visit there. It was in the deepening twilight of a Sunday evening in July that we were deposited at the entrance

of the Hôtel Michel, which faces the public square. A peculiar fascination caused us to forget the dinner hour and sent us wandering about the little town. We knew beforehand that Paimpol was unusually sad this year. There had been many disasters in the Iceland waters and scores of widows and orphans were sorrowing over their losses. Silence and melancholy pervaded the place.

During a visit at Paimpol a few months before, we had witnessed the ceremonial of the blessing of the fishing boats at the annual departure, which takes place at the end of winter. The boats, decked with flags, lay in the harbour and the men already on board awaited the benediction. An altar was built upon the quay, on which the queer little faience Virgin—Protector of sailors—was enthroned. The priest, walking under a canopy, bore the Holy Sacrament. Wives, mothers, sisters and sweethearts followed in procession. The priest, stopping before each boat, uttered the benediction. Then we had seen the little squadron set out, leaving Paimpol void of fathers, husbands, brothers and lovers. As they sailed away they sang in chorus the Hymn of Mary, Star of the Sea, and the women watched tearfully each little craft until it disappeared from the horizon. How many processions of women have I watched as they passed up and down the shore, singing in mournful tones that time-honoured hymn of de-

parture. It is a prayer to Mary: "*Brillez dans le ciel douce étoile d'or.*"

This year, as every year, the same ceremonial of farewell. But August was at hand. News of disasters had already been brought back by a Government ship touching at Iceland. As we wandered about the town we saw only women and children. Their sabots clicked sadly along the narrow streets. The door of the little church stands open. We enter. The deepening twilight turns to darkness inside. Here and there white specks dot the blackness. The eye when grown accustomed discovers in these the white coifs of the widows of Paimpol. At this hour they gather in the church to pray for the souls of their lost ones. We slip quietly out, leaving the sad faces under the white coifs at their mournful vespers.

One is reminded of Pierre Loti's story at every turn. On the public square we pass the window where poor little Gand on that May evening when the smell of the hawthorne blossoms was in the air, leaning out of the casement, listened to the sea and thought of her lover. One can peep inside the very room which furnished the setting for the exquisite letter-writing scene of the third chapter, in which Grandmother Yvonne and the poor girl collaborated.

And mounted in a donkey cart we drive along the road to Ploubalasnec, over which Gand walked on that dreary November afternoon, bent on seeing

the house and family of her lover, who with that unaccountable Breton obstinacy mingled with extreme shyness, wouldn't tell his love.

In the hamlet of Porz-Even we find the little chapel where she paused to read the gruesome tablets and noted the pathetic votive offerings. It is all photographed on the pages of the book.

But a pleasant surprise awaits us at Porz-Even. For we find Jean, the hero of the book, alive and well, instead of having been drowned at sea as the story has it. We see him stalking over the rocks with Sylvestre's baby boy on his shoulder. Yes, Sylvestre, who, after all, did not die on the ship returning from the war, but is actually off on the summer fishing voyage. Even dear old grandmother Yvonne we find still in the flesh and sound in mind, her proud coif crowning her grey hair, and not the least awry as in that last pathetic chapter. We make acquaintance with all these good folk—the veritable models of the story. Jean shows us his house with its additional second story—an uncommon bit of splendor for Porz-Even! We see the two Breton armoire bedsteads in great state, and he shows us many photographs of Pierre Loti. They are great chums. Then he brings good Breton cider—the wine of the Province in which in the quaint faïence bowls of the country we all drink to the safe return of Sylvestre. All this is cheerful, even gay. And the return to Paimpol, driving our absurd little donkey over the route

from Ploubalasnec, is made with the joyful sense of having found something which we had thought to be lost.

Each Breton town has its typical motif. That of Paimpol is in a minor key. The melancholy, long, flowing, black cloak with its capôte, in which the widow of Paimpol envelopes herself, accords with the *tristesse* of the place. M. Anatole Le Braz pictures Paimpol in three words: "La Mer, l'amour, la mort."

To listen to the Gregorian plain chant in the little church, to see the widows and orphans in the cemetery praying at the make-believe tombs of the drowned men—for each fisherman lost at sea has a place in the burial ground ascribed to his memory—all this is to see and know Paimpol and to catch its motif. Only on a Sunday is this possible, as on all other days the entire population is at work in the fields or in their houses.

## CHAPTER XIII

### TRÉGUIER, ST. YVES AND ERNEST RENAN

FROM Paimpol we travel to Tréguier, a matter of several hours' journey.

The archæologist finds in Brittany a historical museum—Keltic monuments, Roman remains and architecture of the Gothic and of the Renaissance period. In this Department through which we are now travelling—the Côtes-du-Nord—several remarkable instances claim a visit. The ruins of the temple of Lanleff, believed by some archæologists to be Roman in its construction, still remains a puzzle to the Savant. The exquisite old church St. Runan, near Pluzunet, is a gem. And in another parish near Pontrieux we find in the deserted chapel Kermaria-an-Isquit of the thirteenth century a curious mural painting representing a Danse Macabre, in which Popes, Kings and Nobles join in lugubrious procession. Much of this queer frieze has been covered with whitewash, but one sees enough to know that the work possesses considerable artistic merit, especially in respect to its colouring.

Tréguier possesses a twofold interest to the traveller, as being the birthplace of Ernest Renan and of St. Ives, the greatest of the Breton Saints. Tréguier was an old town before Armorica took the name of Brittany. In the fifth century Tudwall, the Patron of the Cathedral, fleeing from Great Britain, built here a hermitage, which served as refuge for his companions in exile. The hermitage grew into a monastery, and a little town grouped itself about its walls, increasing gradually until it formed a radius of several miles. The Bishop's Palace, an admirable Cathedral of the thirteenth century, to-day accentuates the ecclesiastical atmosphere of the place. One of the towers of the Cathedral is of the Roman style, there are some remarkable tombs of the middle age, and the stalls are artistically sculptured, portraying the legend of St. Tudwall slaying the dragon that formerly infested the country about Tréguier. Other sculptures represent a legend of St. Yves—a legend which we shall give later. The cloister is very interesting and beautiful.

Brittany has had a nobility of its own, entirely distinct from that which owes its titles to the Kings of France. The Revolution made havoc with this little nest of monks and nobles. The bishops fled to England and the nobility were under a cloud. The bishopric was suppressed; Tréguier was, as it were, decapitated. But later on the immense monastic buildings served for the establishment of

an ecclesiastical college. Tréguier resumed its dignity. But neither commerce nor industries have ever been a factor in its growth.

In a small house of a narrow street bearing the misnomer Grande Rue, on January 27, 1823, Ernest Renan was born and it was in the environment that we have described that the boy grew up. That the gloomy atmosphere of the place had something to do with the indestructible bias that pervaded his life, his "Souvenirs" give us to believe. He tells us how when visiting more commercial towns he was always homesick—how he longed for the belfry tower, the long and narrow nave, the cloister and the fifteenth century tombs. Only when restored to the company of knights and noble dames sleeping tranquilly with their hounds at their feet and torches in their hands and the stone saints ranged in their niches along the inner walls, did he recover himself. It is easy to imagine the little boy wandering about, dreaming in the twilight, in the Cathedral. And when in later years he had become great among the scholars of his country and was the adored Professor of the College of France, he always turned lovingly to these childish days, to the Cathedral and to Brittany.

We seek the house where he was born. The room opening on the street is now used as a bread shop. But the small back room contains some of the original furniture—the Breton bedstead and the great armoire on the top of which Ernest's



ERNEST RENAN  
After the painting by Henri Scheffer, 1860



father used to hide his "Don Quixote" and "Gil Blas." There is an immense stone chimney with open fireplace. In this room Ernest Renan was born. We mount a narrow stairway leading to the garret which served as workroom during his student years at Tréguier. From the two small windows we look out upon a pleasing landscape. Below is the tiny garden and the same rose bushes that his mother cherished. The woman in charge shows us photographs of Renan taken at various periods of his life, tells us how he visited the little house every year, how gracious and gentle he was, and, first glancing prudently about, she whispers: "*tout le monde est si drôle, Tréguier ne comprend pas ce grand homme.*" Later on the old Sacristan shook his head portentously at our mention of the name of Renan, declaring firmly that he would never be allowed burial at Tréguier. Two years later, standing in the crowd that lined the streets of Paris watching the procession bearing the body of Ernest Renan to its burial, I recalled the words of the Sacristan. But Tréguier was not asked to honour her son. The French Government bestowed upon his burial the highest public honours in its power, and the niche at the Panthéon will furnish the tomb which his own parish would have refused him. Scholars know him best through his works on "The Semitic Languages," "The Future of Science," "The Origin of Language," "Essays on Morals and Criticisms," and many others.

More know him through his "Life of Jesus" and the group of philosophic dramas—"Caliban," "L'Eau de Jouvence," "Le Prêtre de Nemi," and others. But as for the man he reveals himself chiefly through his "Souvenirs d'Enfance et de Jeunesse," "Feuilles Détachées," "Correspondence Intime," and other books written shortly before his death.

Some of us doubtless recall the shabby little room, Number Four, at the College of France, where we listened to the lectures of the author of the "Life of Jesus." A certain playful touch peculiar to Renan when dealing with serious subjects was due to his everyday familiarity with the Oriental peoples and customs. When he mentioned the old prophets one felt that they might have lived just around the corner—that one might at any moment encounter Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the rest at almost any turn in the Latin Quarter. This intimate manner with these ancient worthies who have inspired such awe in the usual mind was not due to irreverence but to the peculiar temperament of the man. This peculiarity caused M. Challamel-Lacour to say of Renan: "He thinks like a man, he feels like a woman, he behaves like a child."

In a prominent chapel in the Cathedral of Tréguier we note the tomb of St. Ives, brilliant with fresh flowers and blazing with candles. No saint in the Breton calendar receives to-day the devotion

accorded to this Breton Saint of Lawyers. It required the imagination—or should I say?—the discrimination of the Breton to make a saint of a lawyer—the only instance in Christendom. The old Latin student song is still sung in Tréguier.

*“Sanctus Yvo erat Brito,  
Advocatus et non latro,  
Res miranda populo.”*

The ungracious suggestion in the third line indicates a lingering popular sentiment.

Yves Helori was born in the parish of Tréguier in the middle of the thirteenth century. He was of a noble family living at the Manor of Kermartin, two miles from Tréguier, was educated at Rennes, at Orléans and at Paris in scholastic theology and civil law. He became a judge at Rennes, then at Tréguier, afterward curé of the parish of Lohannec. The widow and orphan had never a more eloquent pastor nor the poor so generous a benefactor. He fed the orphans of his parish, lodging many of them in his own house; others he apprenticed to master workmen whom he salaried from his own purse. He served the most miserable beggars at his table, gave most of his clothing to the poor, visited the sick, consoling and assisting them. He administered the sacrament and prepared for burial the bodies of the poor who died in his house. After a life thus spent he died

on the thirteenth of May, 1303, at the age of fifty. Soon miracles came to be wrought at his tomb. These becoming more and more frequent, the Bretons demanded the canonization of their compatriot. The Pope named a legate who listened to three hundred witnesses of the miracles performed. As the decision of the Synod was greatly delayed the clergy of Tréguier boldly anticipated the decree, celebrating in crowded churches the Fête of St. Yves. When the canonization was finally pronounced at Rome in 1348, St. Yves had been publicly honoured and invoked throughout Brittany. The pilgrimages made to his tomb were so numerous that those to Rome and Palestine dwindled in numbers. This devotion—to a certain extent—exists to-day. Widows and orphans from all over Brittany go to Tréguier to worship at the shrine containing the skull of St. Yves. Renan tells us in his "Souvenirs" that after the death of his father his mother took him to the tomb of St. Yves in the Tréguier Cathedral and there named this Protector of the Orphans the guardian saint of the little Ernest.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE LEGEND AND PARDON OF ST. YVES

PAUL SEBILLOT, in his collections of legends of Brittany, gives a popular legend of St. Yves. According to this St. Yves dies and appears at the gate of Paradise. St. Peter, in answer to his knocking, calls out: "Who's there? And what do you want?" St. Yves replies with impressive dignity: "When one knocks at a door it is naturally to enter." St. Peter grumbles: "Everybody can't come in here as if it were a wine shop; what did you do down there during your life?" "I was a lawyer," replies St. Yves. "A lawyer!" says St. Peter, "you have mistaken the door, go and knock at the other place." And he prudently turns the key twice instead of the usual once. St. Yves, disconcerted, was standing outside when, as luck had it, there arrived a sweet little nun who had died that day at Tréguier, to whom he tells his unlucky adventure. "It can't be possible," says the nun. "St. Peter couldn't shut the door of Paradise to such as you. Let us see." And she knocks softly at the door. She is, of course, promptly received and

St. Yves with her. And the legend goes on to relate how he tried to get a seat among the clergy but the benches were already crowded, the more so as the profession was inclined to stoutness. He was forced to go down to the seats reserved for lawyers, which he finds quite empty. Meanwhile the little nun has difficulty in finding a place among her sisterhood, and upon a nod from St. Yves she comes over and sits with her much-honoured friend from Tréguier. The legend shows that the two became so talkative as to disturb the quiet of the place somewhat, and the archangel charged with police duty in Paradise, comes over to restore quiet, even threatening to turn the lawyer out of the place. But St. Yves reminds him that first, he has possession, and second, he has definite property rights, and he quotes from the Code. The archangel goes off for a bailiff. Of course no such person is to be found in Paradise, and St. Yves is permitted to hold his place. This legend originated in Morbihan, a Department of Brittany always jealous of Tréguier and the glory of her saint, and also possessing intense hatred of the bailiffs of the Government both of which sentiments we note in the legend.

We shall find that our Brittany is a Province of Saints and each saint has his miraculous fountain. When these are sought for healing of disease, coins and other objects are thrown into the fountain. That these were long ago thus frequented is proven

by the fact that in digging deep beneath them, pieces of coin and amulets of ancient epochs have been found. But in place of the Roman divinity a Christian saint now presides over and gives the name to the fountain. Each saint cures some special disease. It is well understood that St. Pabu cures rheumatism, St. Cadoc deafness, and St. Kirion makes a specialty of boils—"father of boils," a popular litany has it. For dropsy one must seek the aid of St. Onene, St. Ivy must be invoked for colic, St. Urlou for gout and St. Trémeur is a specific for neuralgia. How any medical doctor makes a living in Brittany with such distinguished competition is a cause for wonder. Nor are animals without protecting saints. St. Eloi, St. Hervé and St. Gildas are committed in the Breton liturgy to horses. Cows and horned cattle share the spiritual advantages of various saints, St. Herbot being prominent in the long list. At their fêtes troops of these excellent beasts march in procession. St. Cornély is, however, most to be trusted as respects horned cattle, and the great fête of this saint is held at Carnac on the fifteenth of September. At fêtes of horses bunches of hair pulled from the manes and tails of the animals are placed on the altar rail as offerings, while at the shrines of St. Herbot, patron saint of the cow, pats of butter are offered. This is the saint invoked by the Breton dairymaid if the butter is slow in forming in the churn.

St. Yves has no fountain of miraculous water whereby to afford assistance in cases of distress. He descends to no such earthly shrine. The Lawyer Saint pleads the cause of the widow and orphan and of others who suffer from injustice within the gates of that Paradise which at the start threatened to exclude him from its courts.

Only in a single emergency is St. Yves invoked through the medium of his statue. There is a strange and lugubrious custom with the Breton, gradually falling into disuse, called the "adjuration of St. Yves." In the case of serious quarrel; if a Breton suffers from dishonesty of another; if a boundary line has been tampered with and no proof was available, he had only to invoke St. Yves, whose thirst for justice after the six hundred years since his death, is in no wise abated. The wronged person made a pilgrimage to some statue of the saint and, first, placing a few coins in the auriole of the saint, demanded justice of him, sometimes in rather stern language, sometimes in serious carress, going to the length of shaking the wooden image by a shoulder. Many times these words were uttered: "If the right is on his side condemn us; if on our side condemn him; cause him to die within a year." Then the circuit of the chapel is made three times and he kneels before the entrance and makes a last supplication and it is finished. The guilty person dies within the year and justice is accomplished!



PHOTO BY FRANCES N. GOSTLING

THE CHAPEL OF SAINT GILDAS NEAR PORT BLANC  
The patron saint of horses



Thus the Lawyer Saint holds high authority with the Breton, with whom the wall which separates the visible from the invisible is very slight. It has been said in fact that the Breton is generally in a state of mind in which an explanation of natural events is an interpretation of the miraculous.

Of course many legends have gathered about the name of the Lawyer Saint. M. Anatole Le Braz, in his book "*Au Pays des Pardons*," has given the preceeding and the two following legends, parts of which I give in his own words. For instance: his boundless hospitality at the manor house, Kermartin, is illustrated in the following: "A troupe of jugglers arrived in the middle of the night. St. Yves, after a busy day devoted to professional duties, was in the midst of his best sleep. But, awakened by the knocking, he rose, welcomed and fed the guests, serving them with his own hands. After a generous feast of pork, beef and bread had been enjoyed the chief of the Nomad tribe felt called upon to express his gratitude and to explain the several callings of the members of his family; speaking of himself as not only a juggler but a rhymmer of war songs and the Lives of the Saints; then introducing his wife, player on the viol and fortune-teller, and with a knowledge of herbs and a talent for curing diseases by prayer; followed by mention of his two sons, one gifted in playing the bagpipes, the other the flute. The jug-

gler was proceeding to describe the accomplishments of a group of young daughters when St. Yves begged him to spare himself the pains of making further introductions, assuring them that his house was theirs for so long a time as it should please them to remain. Eleven years after, at the time of the death of St. Yves, they were still his guests."

This legend is sculptured on the pulpit of the Cathedral of Tréguier.

The third legend illustrates the hospitality of the Lawyer Saint who never sent a beggar from his door unsatisfied. The legend has it that on one especially stormy night, the cook of the manor house, believing that no one could possibly turn up to ask for food, prepared a limited supply of soup. Contrary to her expectations, crowds of hungry people poured into the old kitchen. The cook was frightened. But St. Yves calmed her fears, and then occurred what in the records of the Life of St. Yves is named: "The Miracle of the Soup," for as fast as the cook ladled out the contents of the kettle, the quantity was made good by miraculous means. Also the loaves of bread were replenished in the same mysterious manner. The ceremony of the "Giving of the Soup," which forms a part of the fête of St. Yves, celebrates this legend.

We must not leave Tréguier without mention of the great fête devoted to St. Yves. Not only is he

the greatest saint in the Breton calendar, but his fame extended to Rome, where in the fourteenth century a church was built, dedicated to him, and altars in his honour were consecrated in various cathedrals in France. Rubens painted a picture of the illustrious Breton and a fresco in Italy shows our Lawyer Saint in the act of giving gratuitous advice to a clientele in rags. His fête occurs on the nineteenth day of May, but one should make a point of arriving at Tréguier on the eighteenth in order to make the pilgrimage to Kermartin to witness the ceremony of the "Giving of the Soup."

We arrive at the manor house, having become attached to a procession of halt, blind and crippled beggars, all making their way to the famous kitchen of the hospitable advocate who was once master there.

The scene is curious and impressive. In the large fireplace, over blazing fagots, several immense kettles are suspended. All about the large kitchen the mendicants are sitting, some on the long benches which line the walls, some on low seats, placed here and there. At a large table a woman gives to each newly-arrived a porringer and spoon. Into this each breaks bread, of which we note great piles at one end of the table, then bringing the porringer to the fireplace, the woman in charge of the kettles ladles the soup into the porringer of each applicant, who returns to his seat. Each one makes the sign of the cross before com-

mencing his repast, and only the soft clicking of the wooden spoons against the faïence porringers is audible. This coming in of the hungry and the departure of the satisfied are accomplished silently and the soup-giving continues until midnight, when the little church close by fills with the motley crowd, who watch and pray until daybreak, when the mass is said, and for them the "Pardon of St. Yves" is ended, save that during the great procession of the following day—the real fête day—these beggars lined the route by which the procession passed, their plaintive songs filling the air and resembling in the distance the droning of bees. During the procession they receive alms from the moving mass. Nowhere as at the fête of St. Yves are the beggars so numerous. For was not St. Yves the protector of the poor? M. Anatole Le Braz has properly named the fête of St. Yves: "The Pardon of the Poor."

I recall a perfect nineteenth of May when we made an important pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Yves. It was the six hundredth anniversary of the death of the Lawyer Saint. At eight o'clock in the morning all the bells of Tréguier were pealing, every house was decorated, as were the streets, with banners, flowers and streamers—the colour of St. Yves (yellow) prevailing. From every direction neighbouring parishioners arriving. Each procession advanced, singing the canticle of St. Yves set to the music of an ancient Breton Battle

Hymn. The clergy of Tréguier went to meet each procession and the curious salutation of the banners took place, after which all passed to the Cathedral, where, after short devotions at the tomb of the saint, brilliant with lighted candles and gorgeous with flowers, each parish was in turn assigned its place in the great procession being massed on the public square. Over twenty parishes poured into Tréguier that day and many thousands of pilgrims besides from all over Brittany.

The great procession always makes the pilgrimage to Kermartin, two miles from Tréguier, where are the tomb and the manor house of the Saint. The latter is still standing and some of the furniture remains. The tomb is in the little churchyard of Minihy close by. In the church one sees inscribed on the walls the last will and testament of Yves Hélotry; in the sacristy are treasured the remains of his breviary. Although the body of St. Yves reposes at Minihy, his skull is enshrined in a gold casket in the tomb in the Cathedral at Tréguier. This is always borne with great pomp in the procession on the day of the fête. But the actual tomb at Minihy is a small arcade under which the faithful pass, kneeling, in fact creeping, so low is the stone placed. Unless one performs this little ceremony one may not lay claim to being truly "bretonnate."

By nine o'clock the great procession begins to move from Tréguier, the bells incessantly ringing,

military bands playing, choristers and people singing, and always and only the one Cantic—the Cantic of St. Yves—of which the refrain is, in the Breton language:

*N'hen es ket en Breiz, n'hen es ket unan,  
N'hen es ket eur Zant evel Sant Erwan.*

Which put into French:

*Il n'y a pas en Bretagne, il n'y a pas un  
Il n'y a pas un Saint comme St. Yves.*

The priest of each parish in turn sings a stanza, then choristers and choirs, bands and people take up the refrain.

The procession, two miles long, with its hundreds of gay banners, the rich vestments of the clergy, the scarlet and white of the choristers, the gay fête costumes of the peasants, all flashing in the sunshine under the bluest of skies, as it goes winding through the fields, gives, in its ensemble, the impression of a gorgeous silken scarf tossed across the green meadows in endless length of prismatic colour. And always and always that refrain, sung in march rhythm, each pilgrim keeping time in his step and with his staff repeats the familiar refrain:

*"N'hen es ket en Breiz. N'hen es ket unan."*

Arrived at Minihy mass is said in the open air and the procession passing under the arcade of the tomb returns to Tréguier, disperses for the midday repast, and the afternoon is passed among the booths erected in the public square and in sports of various kinds.

Such is the Pardon of St. Yves, a Saint in all ways worthy of the great Profession of which he is Patron.

## CHAPTER XV

### MORLAIX, BARDS AND POETS

OUR next stopping-place is Morlaix, where we find some interesting mediæval houses. That of Anne of Brittany, rich in carved staircases and superbly decorated throughout, is much visited by travellers. Albert the Monk of Morliax here recorded the "Lives of the Saints of Brittany."

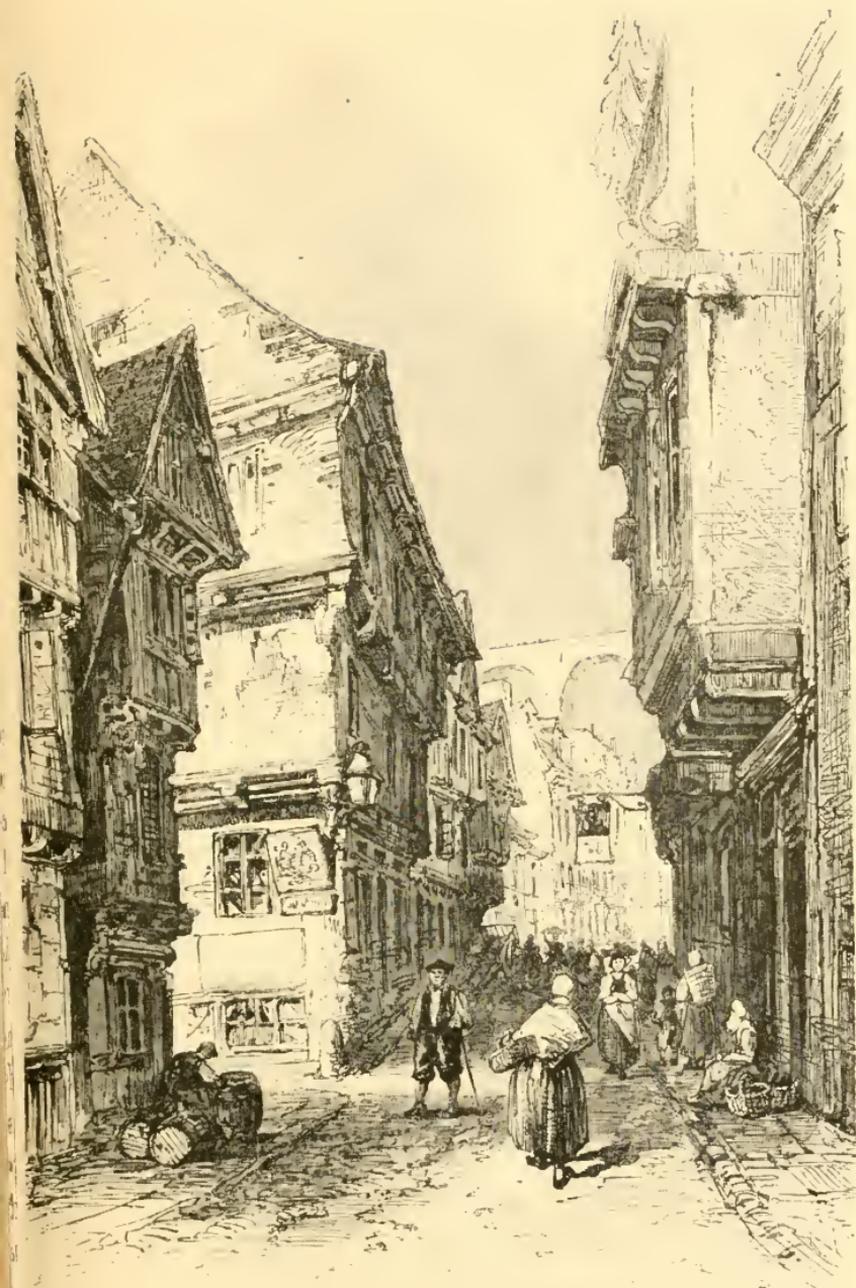
The public square bearing the name of Émile Souvestre, attracts one, and we note its statue—a souvenir of one of the best-known writers of Breton birth. Morlaix is to-day proud of the distinction of being the birthplace of Émile Souvestre, although the author of "Le Philosophe Sous Les Toits" was not appreciated by its citizens in his day. But the book is Parisian, and to a lover of Brittany his half dozen books: "Les Derniers Bretons," "Le Foyer Breton," "Souvenirs d'un Bas-Breton," etc., are more important.

From Morlaix we take train for St. Pol-de-Léon in Finistère. We are nearing the land of the Pardon, of the pilgrimage, nursery of folk songs, do-

main of the Legend. We hail the constant click of the sabot, the droning song of the beggar and the sound of the Keltic language, for we must bear in mind that the Breton is not French, he is pure Kelt and speaks a Keltic language. Hence the ancient bards long held a kind of authority over the people, and the superstitions and legends of Lower Brittany to-day are due to the survival of this racial talent for the mysterious and supernatural. Several Breton men of letters have searched out these old songs, some of them only fragments, and have translated them from the Keltic tongue into French.

Our introduction to Finistère through the town of St. Pol-de-Léon gives us a good impression of Lower Brittany. The inhabitants of this town have been from the earliest time less barbaric than in other parts of Finistère. They are also the most religious of the Province. Nothing equals the respect of the Léonaise for the dead. He kneels at the wooden cross that designates a tomb without even reading the name of the person buried there. When there is no more room in the cemetery the Léonaise, faithful to the training of his ancestors, collects the sacred bones and places them in beautiful ossuaries, some of them masterpieces of naïve and patient art. In the country of Léon we find the richest Calvaries in Brittany, and many sculptured pulpits, altars, baptismal fonts and ornaments.

The Léonais is brave, collected, imposing. His garments are as severe as his face. He holds to the ample black vestment, something like the clerical mantle, and the low, wide-brimmed hat. The Léonais may be named the Quaker of Brittany. It is a splendid race of men with regular features and fine eyes full of expression. It is not strange that there should be much in the temperament of the Léonais which is sombre. Even in the wooing of lovers there is generally great seriousness. The lugubrious insensibilities of a maid of St. Pol-de-Léon is set forth in a very queer and ancient song of the tenth century, preserved by Émile Souvestre, in which, to each entreaty of the youth for a return of affection, she bids him instead of seeking happiness, to repair to the ossuary and view the skeletons which she describes in a realistic manner, worthy of Zola or Huysmans. The youth's further entreaties inspire the maid to predict a most unpleasant dance which her lover will be likely to perform in the next life—the demon, with red-hot forks playing maliciously with his bare feet. But the lover persists (one wonders why), whereupon the dispiriting maiden begins to describe a life in a convent to which she intends to retire, and the poem ends thus: "Oh, my mistress, how much time I have passed with you and to no profit if what you say be true." To which she replies: "Young man, you are beautiful and fat" (in the eyes of the Breton peasants corpulency



A STREET IN MORLAIX

The home of the Franciscan Monk, Albert of Morlaix  
who first collected the Legends of Brittany



is a point of beauty, as indicating leisure and wealth). "You are beautiful and fat, and I will reward you for the time you have lost by praying for you morning and evening that you may enter Paradise——" "Adieu, then, O Maiden, alas! I now know it is wrong to laugh when one is young, for life is sad. It is wrong to find the milk of the nurse sweet, for life is bitter."

M. Anatole Le Braz has written a thrilling novel: "Le Gardien du Feu," in which a Léonais marries a girl from Tréguier. This novel portrays a tragic problem.

M. Anatole Le Braz portrays this part of Brittany admirably in his book "La Terre du Passé" and in "The Land of Pardons" and several romances translated by Frances Gostling.

Many famous sons of France have belonged to Brittany, and have written of that fascinating country. Among them Brizeux, Charles Le Goffic, Villemarqué, Emile Souvestre, Luzel, Tiezcelin (endless volumes of poetry—for the Bretons are all poets). There is a splendid history of Brittany by de la Borderie, countless books and brochures on matters archæological. I have had the pleasure of reading several hundred books that have to do with my subject in French alone, but I mention here only such as are most useful to the general traveller in Brittany. If but four books could be chosen from the many, let them be: A. Le Braz's "Land of Pardons," Pierre Loti's "Pêcheur

d'Islande," Brizeux's poem "Marie," Ernest Renan's "Souvenirs d'Enfance et de Jeunesse."

To-day yet another school of singers has come to take possession, quite modern. Chief of the present bards (for poets are still called bards in Lower Brittany) are Theodore Botrel and Francois Jaffrenou. The former, born in Upper Brittany, composes his songs and sings them in French. Jaffrenou—a native of the Mountains of Arez in Lower Brittany—writes only in the Breton and sings his songs in the same language, and with the vigor which suggests the oaks and granite of his country, while Botrel \* captivates his audiences by a contrasting, graceful touch that is truly French. It would be difficult to say which of these two Breton bards is more enjoyable. Both please their public.

But there remained until a few years ago in Brittany one of the old popular singers—a link between past and present bardism, and it is a pleasure to note that the joyous young bards did not scorn this relic of the past, on the contrary—old Marc'harit Phulup was held in profound respect by them and indeed by all Brittany.

Of her I shall have more to say later on.

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\* During the war Botrel went from hospital to hospital singing to the wounded French soldiers.

## CHAPTER XVI

MARC'HARIT PHULUP AND JOB LA POULAINÉ

IN THE September of 1900, in the old town of Guingamp during the sessions of the Congress of the Union Régionaliste Breton, composed of Breton men of letters, every evening was devoted to the "cabaret breton," cider flowed freely; the poets recited their verses; the bards sang their songs; the audience joined in the refrains. The old and popular rondo, "Anne of Brittany and Her Wooden Shoes," once set going, was sure to bring the audience to a high pitch of enthusiasm. But not to the highest. For one evening, in the midst of the programme, a woman about sixty years of age, in sabots well lined with straw, no stockings, a dark blue cotton gown and apron of the same material, a small shoulder shawl and the white coif of the peasant of Pluzunet, came upon the platform. The entire audience rose and greeted her—two, three—round after round of cheering. The woman stood smiling at her audience. Then she sang. It was Marc'harit Phulup, known through-

out Brittany as "old Marc'harit." I had met her name in the preface of Luzel's volumes of "Popular Tales" where this greatest of the Breton folklorists writes: "Marc'harit Phulup has given me the whole treasure of popular literature known between the bourg of Pluzunet, the Menezbré, Guingamp, Pourtrieux, Tréguier and Lannion. Endowed with a mediocre intelligence, she possesses an excellent memory, loves passionately the old songs and the fairy tales which she is not far from believing to be true, and she recites these simply and with great respect for the traditions. Spinner by profession, pilgrim by procuration, she is almost constantly on the routes leading to some sacred fountain or chapel of the Côtes-du-Nord, Finistère or Morbihan to implore the Saint whose specialty it is to cure the malady of the person sending her, or of his horse, or cow, or pig, and she brings back a bottle filled with water from the miraculous fountain bearing the name of the saint invoked. Wherever she passes she inquires about the existing traditions of the locality, listens, commits to memory and two or three times a year I give her a *rendezvous* at Plouaret and share the additions with which she has enriched her treasury. It is truly astonishing, all that she has recited to me, and I owe her great obligations."

I said: "She stood smiling down at her audience." Then she sang—not the songs of to-day, but those taught her by her mother, who in turn had



MAR'CHARIT PHULUP  
1835-1909



learned them from *her* mother—a family of spinners. In Brittany it has often been to the rhythm of the wheel that the popular songs have been sung.

Marc'harit Phulup was a beggar—but not from choice, for the paralysis of an arm made her profession of spinner impossible. However, in Brittany, to *be a beggar* is considered no disgrace, and Marc'harit's faith in the Saints being boundless, her intercession at their shrines was held to be very efficacious, and she was in great demand as a pilgrim. For making a pilgrimage at a distance of thirty miles she was paid eight sous!

I am proud to have possessed the affectionate friendship of this last of the old popular singers. We made many journeys together, she being my guest. Her sole impedimenta in travelling consisted of a list of her songs, 168 altogether,—of which she was justly proud, a list made for her by the great Luzel. Just how she managed her daily toilette was always a mystery to me. At one moment, impelled by the apparent necessities of the case, I ventured to present my fellow traveller with a cake of soap, rose-tinted and highly perfumed. I found a week later that she treasured the gift as a precious souvenir of "Bretonez-Tramôr" (the name I bear among my Bretons, meaning: "a Breton lady from over the sea"). Some of the Breton men of letters, realizing the value of Marc'harit's songs, have had the most important

phonographed, and placed among the archives of the University of Rennes.

How vividly I recall the many hours which Marc'harit and I passed together, as we sat by the roadside, watching processions given for St. Yves and other saints. It was on one of these occasions that she taught me that little song, "Ann hini goz," the most ancient of the Breton folk songs. It has been named the "ranz des vaches" of the Breton, for he weeps when absent from his country if he hears it sung. Every Breton has been rocked to sleep to its rhythm. The five little notes which compose the melody of "Ann hini goz" stand for mother—home—Brittany.

Great singers may be younger, fairer, richer, but give me my poor, dear old Marc'harit, and as I hum this little tune there comes to me the souvenir of an old face, under a peasant's coif—of a form worn by age and poverty, in the humble garb of a beggar. Not the glint of a white satin slipper and silken hose in the midst of dainty frou-frou, but a pair of wooden shoes thrust boldly out on the green grass, and no stockings. Not a pair of white gloves, but two poor old hands knotted by rheumatism, and rough from working in the fields, and I recall her constrained, resonant voice, and the "Ann hini goz."

Several years ago she passed on at the age of seventy-three. Doubtless she promptly sought and found her favorite Saint in some Amen corner of

that Paradise which was at first so inhospitable to St. Yves.

In the month of September, 1911, nearly three years after the death of my friend, which occurred in 1909, there gathered in the little hamlet of Pluzunet a distinguished company of Bretons—poets—singers,—professors—folk-lorists—romancers—philologists—archæologists. Also a crowd of peasants from the country about Pluzunet, come to witness the inauguration of a tomb in the little cemetery of the village. Marc'harit had been buried in the pauper's corner. But certain friends had felt that this last of the singers of folk-songs—the link between the ancient Brittany and that of to-day—deserved a more honourable burial. A lot was bought in perpetuity, and on this a beautiful tomb of the granite of Kersanton had been placed. On the tomb were engraven—Marc'harit Phulup, with date of birth and death. And for an epitaph these words from an almost forgotten Breton poet: "*Lud-Jan*": "*Je n'ai fait qu'une chose ici-bas—J'ai chanté.*" Only, as Marc'harit did not know French, nor did her fellow townsfolk, these words were put into Breton, and so engraven on the stone. Garlands of heather—the pan-Keltic flower—encircled the base of the tomb. High mass was said in the parish church at nine o'clock—then the company of Breton men of letters gathered at one side of the tomb—Le Goffic, Le Braz, Jaffrenou, Botrel, Durocher, Ernault and many

others—each gifted in his especial way. Throngs of peasants filled the cemetery on the opposite side. Each of the men of letters, in turn, stepped forward with his offering—in verse or prose—no such gathering of the scholars of Brittany had ever occurred as that which had assembled to do honor to a beggar—a mere singer of songs. For an hour the literary programme went on, and then all sat down at table in the modest inn of Pluzunet—twenty-two altogether, and there for four hours the symposium continued—songs—remembrances of old Marc'harit—speeches—recitations. That was a day for Pluzunet—the parish folk who had seen old Marc'harit going and coming, in their midst all these years, were amazed at all these festivities. For the *rest* of us—it was a recognition of the value of a unique personage.

There are many ambulant singers of less importance in Brittany—of more modern traditions. These are sure to be present at fêtes, weddings and pilgrimages. They are welcome guests at every fireside.

Another precious experience among many intimate happenings—has been my friendship for another popular old singer in Brittany, less important than Marc'harit. This is Job la Poulaine, of Ploumanack (Côtes du Nord). We are fast friends. She lives in a sort of grotto, twelve feet square, formed by the relative position of several immense boulders—tossed one upon another. The *people*





tell you that Job's ancestors were fairies (I like to believe what the Breton peasants tell me—their facts are sure to be picturesque and unique). They hold her in great respect. She is the only person I have met during my long life who owns to being absolutely happy—whose every wish is gratified. The drunkard-husband whom she supports by working in the fields *might* present to *some* minds an obstacle to perfect bliss. That such is not the case suggests some potent charm at Job's command, that doubtless only fairy folk understand. She is sixty years old. Her clear pink and white complexion, and large, blue, happy eyes are beautiful to see. Job la Poulainé finds her recreation in song. During my visits at her grotto, I have listened to her entire repertory, which includes both sacred and secular music—the former being her preference. I have been treated—especially if the day be a Sunday—to an entire mass—she taking the rôle of priest, choir and people in turn—in Gregorian plain-chant and in resonant Latin. Her Latin flows unctuously, although she does not know the language. Many a delightful hour have I passed in Job's grotto—the head of the family being invariably at the wine shop a mile away. Job's goat and pair of hens—together with myself, forming the audience at these musical séances.

## CHAPTER XVII

### A BRETON WEDDING

IN BRITTANY when we meet a young man and maid walking along the country road with their little fingers interlocked, we know that a wedding will soon follow. The locked fingers furnish the announcement of the betrothal of the pair. How many such couples have I encountered—all smiles and blushes—proclaiming the announcement “*au petit doigt*” as it is called.

In Lower Brittany the wedding involves much of curious custom and naïve sentiment. The wedding occurs soon after the betrothal. But for many years the wedding chest has, by slow instalments, been made ready by the mother of the bride. Often the coffer has been carved, on winter evenings, through many years by some relative of the family. These coffers and the *lit clos* (the armoire bedstead) and sometimes a massive armoire constitute the *lares et penates* of thrifty Breton families. As the time fixed for the wedding approaches, there is a commotion in the family, the

excitement of which spreads through the parish. The wedding gown is made—the linen, stored for many years, is whitened in the fields, the carved bedstead, armoire and coffers are waxed and polished, all the brass and copper utensils are made to shine like gold. Then on a Saturday evening comes the betrothal supper to the intimate friends. The next day at high mass the bans are published, after which the invitations to the wedding are given. On the morning of the wedding crowds of friends gather to join the procession to the church, which the bridegroom leads with the chosen best man; after the religious ceremony the procession passes to the house of the bride, the binions playing vociferously. The house (more often than otherwise consisting of one room) has been hung with white linen sheets with wreaths and bouquets attached to their surface. Tables are spread inside and outside the house. The feast consists of everything within the means of the family to provide. Be sure that cider, the national beverage, flows freely. Eating, drinking, songs sung by the ambulant singers, and dancing fill the afternoon and night hours. (During the repast the binious go on playing, and a dance now and then, by way of *entrée* between courses, is in order.) Numerous beggars are sure to be present, and the poorest of these dances with the bride, as this is sure to bring good luck to the newly-married. The ceremony of the *soupe-au-lait*, difficult to describe here, is

still a custom in the mountains. In certain parts of Finistère the festivities last three days. The final event is the ceremony of carrying the bride's armoire to the house of her new husband. We may be sure this armoire is shining like a mirror and its brasses like gold, and bouquets adorn the four corners. Placed upon a wagon drawn by horses decorated with ribbons and flowers, it is finally placed in the corner prepared, in the midst of bravos.

At Plougastel all the marriages take place on two days of the year, one of these being the twelfth day—always at nine in the morning. Before day-break the town is filled with carts and carriages bringing kinsfolk and friends, and the streets swarm with men and women in their fête costumes—and the costumes of Plougastel are of more vivid colors than elsewhere in Brittany. All the couples are ranged at the altar rail, the bridegrooms being led up by their best men, and the brides by their fathers. A tall, lighted candle is placed before each couple. After the joining of these many pairs of hands and the benediction, the anthem is sung and mass follows. Bride and groom do not leave the church together, but are sure to find each other shortly after—at least I have never known any of them to get lost!

I am going to speak in some detail of the most recent and also the most important wedding that I have attended in Brittany.

One day when I was attending one of the Congresses of the Breton bards—in Carnac in Lower Brittany, a priest of a little parish in the northern part of Morbihan came to invite me to his sister's wedding. He also gave me the privilege of bringing with me any friend whom I would like to invite, adding naïvely that there would be abundant entertainment, as there were to be slain three beeves and seven calves in provision for the feast. Five hundred invitations had been given, and it was to be a three-days' affair. *Rendezvous* was made at Vannes—the capital of Morbihan—twelve miles from the place of the wedding—on the afternoon preceding the event.

It was already nine o'clock the next morning when we arrived at the place designated. The priest installed us at a Convent opposite the house of the bride, and shortly after brought his sister to greet us. She was already dressed for the ceremony, save for the orange flowers—a Parisian innovation seldom seen in Brittany. She wore the usual peasant gown of black—but heavily banded in velvet and embroidery—an apron of gorgeous stuff, crimson satin with large mantle of heavy velvet thrown over it—and the usual coif of her parish. She was sweet and tranquil and offered both cheeks to be kissed all around—then returned home for the final touch—a small wreath of orange blossoms surmounting the top of the coif, and lastly white gloves—another Parisian innovation. At

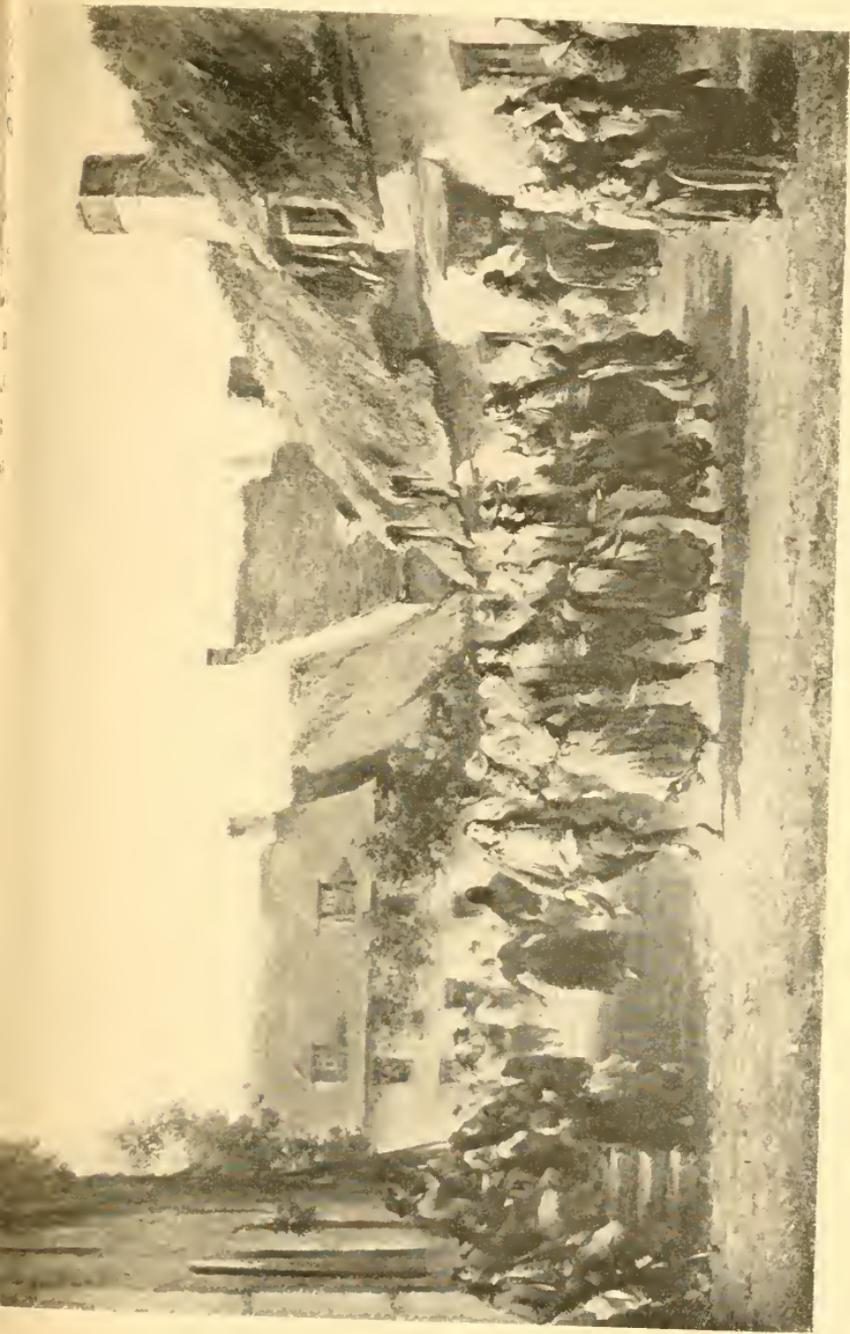
ten o'clock the bells began pealing and the procession marched to the church—the bride and groom leading. The wedding ceremony was, as always, in Breton. The wedding feast and dancing were to take place in a field near by. Thither the procession moved from the church, passing along a beautiful shady lane. At the wide-open gate of the field a halt was made, and immediately the chief cook and master of ceremonies advanced with a dish on which was a huge piece of beef—smoking hot from the cauldron. This was offered to the bridegroom who, taking from his pocket his knife (as all Breton peasants do), cut a morsel and offered it to the bride, who ate it, he cutting another for himself. Next came another man with a large loaf of bread. The bridegroom cut a bit from the loaf and served the bride and himself in the same manner. Lastly came dancing up a pair of handsome young Bretons, gaily decorated with flowers and ribbons, bearing between them a large two-handled vase or jug. We note the fine old Roman shape of the jug and recall that Cæsar conquered Gaul and made headquarters in Morbihan where many of the Roman forms of pottery linger. The two wine-bearers—(only the wine is plain Breton cider) as they advance in dancing, rhythmic step, sing an ancient Breton drinking song. The especial duty of the wine-bearer is supposed to be to “cheer the bride.” They approach the young couple, always in this dancing fashion, and

each offers a glass of cider to the pair. Afterward cider was offered to us, as we were placed next to the bride. Then the procession moved through the gate and into the field. Seven cauldrons—each in charge of a cook—the chef in charge of the whole—were steaming at one end of the field, and I recalled the beeves to be slain in the invitation. Two long tables—placed twelve feet apart, extended to the farther end, and at the upper end connecting the two—a table covered with damask and decorated with bouquets, was arranged for the bridal company. Benches ranged along both sides of the tables furnished seats for the company. The first course consisted of the soup of the *pot-au-feu*, the second, beef and vegetables. For the third we were served personally by the bride's mother, who displayed special pride in the ragout, which she informed us had been prepared in her own kitchen under her personal supervision. Mountains of bread placed at intervals on the tables completed the menu. But the wine-bearers were ever active, up and down—back and forth in the space between the two long tables they danced and sang and served—I begged from one of them a translation of one of the drinking songs—as it was sung in the Breton language. It was Horatian in sentiment, with a touch of Breton lugubriousness: "Let us drink and be merry to-day, for to-morrow we shall die and our bodies be food for worms——" Just *how* this could "cheer the bride" he did not at-

tempt to explain. No dessert was offered at table, but women with baskets of cake and other sweets, which could be bought if desired, made their appearance in the field after the repast.

At the close of the feast the bride rose, turned her back to the table, the others following her movements—and then followed a most impressive incident—an aged woman, all her life a servant of the family, knelt on the ground at the feet of the bride and uttered a long prayer. It was a prayer for the dead—those of the family—whose presence at this marriage fête she invoked. For the Breton is never far removed from his lost ones, and each family fête and event is shared by them.

As the prayer ended the sound of the binions was heard, and in the centre of the field two players of bagpipes were stationed. The bride and groom with bridesmaid and best man begin the dance—the gavotte being the favourite dance at weddings. Gradually the circle grows larger and presently the entire field is in movement—meanwhile the wine-bearers are always serving—the “cheering of the bride” seems to succeed in spite of the mortuary suggestions of the song. For when she leaves the dancing at five o’clock to join us at her mother’s house for a farewell glass of wine, she seems radiant, and, although she has been dancing for five hours, she is unflushed by the effort. At the mother’s house we all drink to the health of the newly married, and they to ours—



A VILLAGE DANCE IN BRITTANY  
After the painting by A. Leleux



the bride disappears for five minutes and returns resplendent in another apron—this time of pale blue brocade; after all, why possess the trousseau of two aprons if the invited guests be unaware of the fact! And so we depart—another banquet, precisely like the first, is to be served and the dancing will go on until midnight; on the second day the programme will be like that of the first, and on the third day, given up to the poor, the final ceremony of carrying the bride's wardrobe to her husband's house will close the wedding fête.

The invocation of the dead at the wedding feast illustrates one of the strongest traits of Breton character—the cult of the dead—*voilà la Bretagne!*

On All Souls Eve, in Breton homes, a bright fire is kept blazing on the hearth when the family retires for the night—a table covered with a white cloth (“article de luxe chez les Bretons”) is set forth with cider and crîps (a kind of wheat cake), all ready in case some family ghost chance to visit the familiar place, hungry! For on that night it is prudent to avoid going outside, as the dead are walking hither and thither on the highways, and like not to be interfered with, so the Breton prudently retires early—taking no chances of harm from any stray malignant ghost—but hospitably providing for the entertainment of his own family wraiths. If, however, a Breton is forced to go abroad on that night any implement of labor car-

ried on his person serves as a protection—even a thimble or a needle suffices.

The Veillée with the Bretons is a becoming and dignified function—in other Keltic countries, notably in Ireland, the best-intentioned Wake has been known to come to an unworthy end. But with the Bretons the Veillée has retained its discreet and tender element. I have shared several such in Brittany. Near relatives and friends gather at nightfall and sit through the night—their dead is in their midst—they talk of the departed—recall this or that deed or quality—recite souvenirs—now and then some one kneels and prays in silence. Sometimes certain songs are sung—all is tender, affectionate and sympathetic. At midnight coffee (never anything stronger) is served with simple refreshments, and the watch continues until dawn—and thus on each night until the burial takes place.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### BRETON COSTUMES, LANDERNEU, LA GARDE JOYEUSE

IN LOWER BRITTANY the costumes of the people are more interesting and unique. The coif worn by the women is a strong feature of the costume, each canton having its own special style, and any Breton woman knows the home of any other from the fashion of her headdress. How many delightful talks do we recall, sitting on a bench in some public square in Paris, with some Breton woman, won into this privilege through my having accosted her and placing her home-parish by means of her coif. There are over one thousand different coifs in Brittany. I have seen seven hundred in a single collection. Each style seems more interesting than another, and the laundering of these airy bits of finery would place many a Parisian laundress at a disadvantage. In some sections the peasant woman wears a black skirt scarcely reaching the ankle, a jacket of the bolero order and a chemisette which, like the coif, gives a touch of freshness to the costume. For fête-days, the jacket of the women, as well as the waistcoats (called gilets) of the men, are richly embroidered. And lastly, the apron! the apron of silk! What

endless economies have been practised in order to possess this culminating feature of the costume. It is sure to be of the most vivid colors—such unrelenting purples and crimsons and apple-greens as even the rankest impressionist never imagined! And be sure the creases in this silken bit of adornment are always in evidence and are held as so many lines of beauty. Once accomplished, the apron of the Breton peasant lasts a lifetime, and is transmitted to posterity. Arriving home from the fête, the entire costume, saving the coif which is always worn, is carefully packed away in the carved family chest, there to repose until the occurrence of some other festivity.

In order to see the ancient costumes of the men one should attend a large fair or Pardon. At such times the old men come out in the toggery of their ancestors. Accordeon-pleated trousers confined at the knee with silver buckles, leggings and sabots, white chemisette, embroidered gilets, velvet jackets ornamented with many buttons, a broad belt with ponderous buckle, the hat broad-brimmed, low-crowned, with long, floating ends of velvet ribbon fastened by a silver buckle. The young Breton to-day holds to the gilet, chemisette and low hat with floating ribbons. But in order to get a true idea of the costume our Breton should be inside it. It all goes together. Much time and zeal are expended in the embroideries employed in the costumes. Usually this ornamental work is done by

the men, the women going into the field, leaving her lord at home at his embroidering! To-day the costume is worn only by the peasants. Formerly the nobility wore the same, and it was thus that the Breton lords went to the Parliament and to the Royal Court at Paris.

In the time of Louis XII, Anne of Brittany, his queen, made many Breton families popular at Court. The large trousers worn to the knee, of the later period of Henry II to Henry IV, originated in the Keltic *braies*, *brago bras* in Breton, the same that Cæsar describes in his Commentaries (*Gallia braccata*.)

But here we are talking of frills and furbelows, as our train is arriving at Landerneau. From Landerneau the river Elorn winds its way to Brest, a dozen miles away, between bold rocks on the left and the forest on the right bank. The bridge which spans the river, in the heart of the town of Landerneau, is of medieval origin, and is the only example of its kind in France. One of the two rows of buildings erected on the bridge remain—among these a mill, Gothic in style, with an inscription in Gothic attesting that it was built by the Rohans in 1510. The Lords of Landerneau were great in their day. Madame de Sévigné, whose château was in Northern Brittany, was not familiar with the elaborate costumes of Lower Brittany, and in one of her letters tells of a blunder on her part, owing to this ignorance. One imag-

ines this clever woman was not often guilty of a *faux pas!* It occurred in Vitré, during the sessions of the Breton Parliament, at a house where she was intimate. She writes: "I saw before dinner at the end of the room, a man whom I took to be the steward. I went to him and begged of him, 'Do let us dine, I am dead with hunger.' This man looked at me and replied with great politeness: 'My dear madame, I wish I might be so happy as to offer you dinner at my house. My name is Récardière and my château is only two leagues from Landerneu.' It was a *gentleman* from Lower Brittany," adds Madame de Sévigné.

Landerneu has been immortalized by her moon. A Sire de Landerneu, at Versailles where the splendours of the Court failed to impress him, remarked that the moon at Landerneu was much larger than that of Versailles, and his saying passes still for a joke upon the Breton town.

From this place we make various excursions. That to the ruins of the Garde Joyeuse of Arthur, celebrated in the romance of the Round Table, is most interesting. Only the subterranean vaults, the walls outlining the château and the gateway, wreathed with ivy, remain as a souvenir of that magical Round Table, about which the middle age grouped its ideals of heroism, beauty, love and loyalty. So the Breton, backed by savants, claims that in the Forest of Landerneu Arthur at one time held his Court.

As for ourselves, sitting on the greensward where once may have been the Court of Honor of this Garde Joyeuse, we are at least grateful that through this Legend we are possessed of that gallery of fine old pictures—the good King Arthur, Merlin the Enchanter—the wise Councillor Germain, Parsifal, Champion of Spiritual Knighthood, as are the gallant Launcelot and Tristram of secular chivalry—and in this soft color of a September afternoon we evoke the image of the proud and beautiful Guinevère, the tender Yseult with the blond hair, the sweet and patient Enid and the fairies of the company, Vivian and Morgan.

The drive from Landerneu to Plougastel is delightful, the route following the windings of the river Elorn. Plougastel is noted for its wonderful calvary. This, one of the finest in Brittany, is of the sixteenth century, massive, crowned with two large square tablets one above the other. On these are sculptured scenes from the life of Christ—the Flight into Egypt, the Marriage of Cana, the Foot Washing and the drama of the Passion being elaborately set forth. Over two hundred figures are sculptured, inartistically, but with a certain force and with great naiveté. In the scene of the triumphant return of Christ to Jerusalem, our Lord is preceded by Breton peasants in national costumes, playing bagpipes.

A drive in quite another direction takes us to Nôtre Dame du Folgoät. In the days of Anne of

Brittany, Folgoät was as a place of pilgrimage what Lourdes is to-day. The miracle, which in the fourteenth century brought about the building of this beautiful church, is embodied in one of the best-known legends of Brittany.

“A poor boy, named Calaün, better known as the Fool of the Forest of Folgoät, where he lived, had the habit of bathing in the water of a fountain, and after the bath swinging himself in the branches of a tree near the fountain until dry. He had a way of singing, as he thus swung, and his sole song was “Ave Maria.” No other word ever passed his lips. He begged his bread from door to door. The legend records of him that he never gave offense to any one. Thus he lived for forty years. One day poor Salaün was found dead near the fountain. It was whispered about in the parish that the Virgin herself nursed and comforted him, and that dying, he repeated always the sweet name of Mary. The people of the hamlet buried him, and there sprang from his tomb a beautiful white lily of great fragrance, on the petals of which were traced in golden letters the words: “Ave Maria.” The news spread from hamlet to hamlet, and all the people of the country flocked to Folgoät to see the miraculous lily. The clergy took the matter in hand, opened the grave and found that the lily had grown from the mouth of the poor boy. It was at once resolved to build a church there. Such is the **origin** of one of the finest monuments in

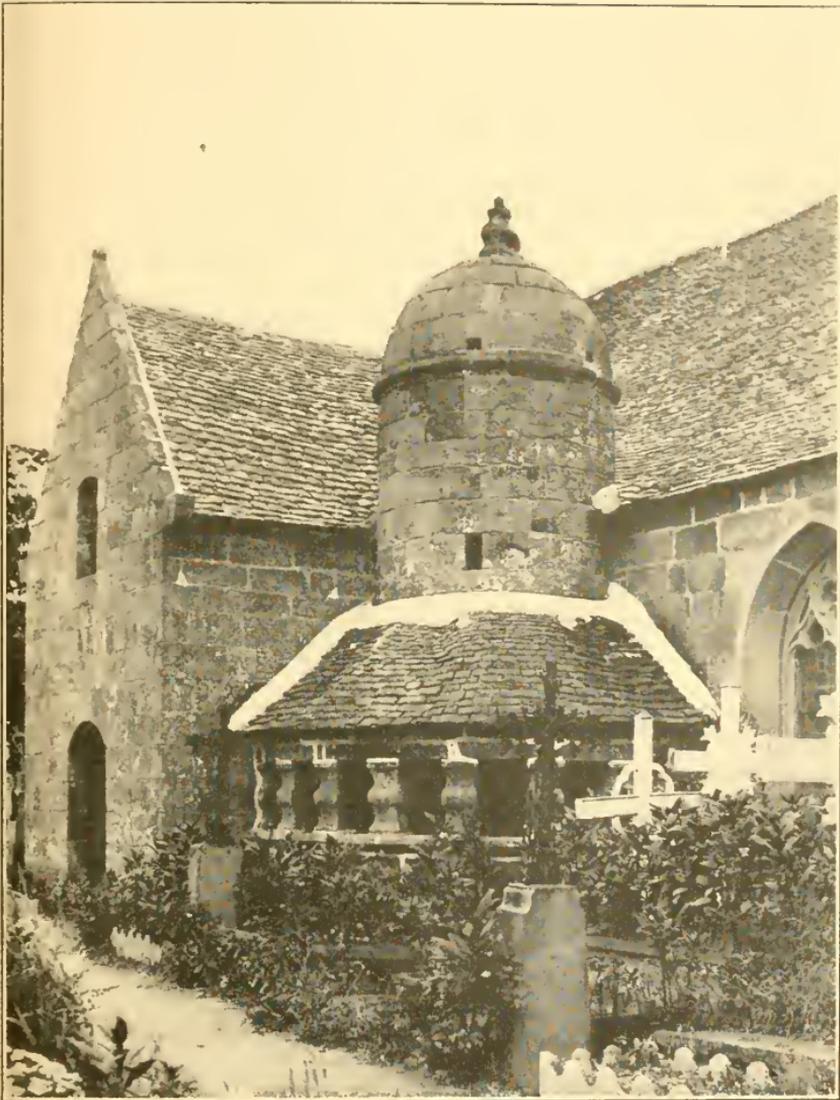
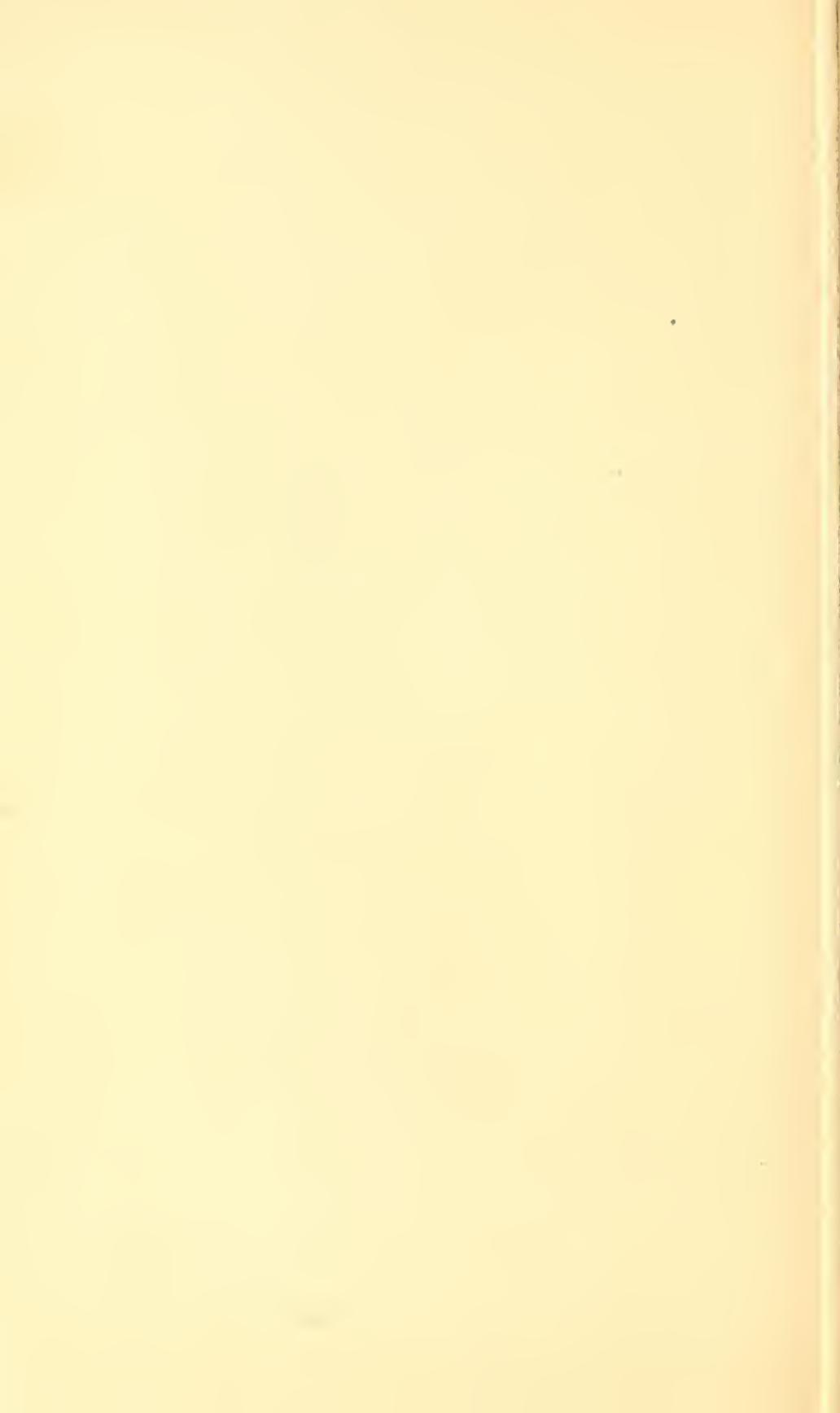


PHOTO BY FRANCES N. COSTLING

THE BONE HOUSE AT TREGASTEL, INSCRIBED  
"TODAY ME, TOMORROW THEE"



Brittany. The fountain still exists and pilgrims seek its waters for cures of many maladies. Except for the pilgrimages Folgoät is quite deserted. The gem of the interior of the church is the richly carved screen in three arcades, sculptured in lace-like designs, although the material is the granite of Kersanton, of a quality more like iron than stone. In the sculptures which adorn the pulpit the legend of the Fool of the Forest is reproduced at the hands of a sculptor of no ordinary merit.

On the twenty-ninth of August occurs the Fête of Notre Dame de Folgoät—a fête very popular. Every pardon, as such a fête is named, has its own characteristics—its special canticle. That of Folgoät sets forth the legend of the Fool of the Forest and is sung to the music of a very ancient hymn, much employed by the early missionaries—probably as early as the fifth century.

*Patronez dous ar Folgoät,  
 Hor mam hag hon Itron,  
 An dour en hon daoulagat,  
 Ni ho ped a galon!  
 Harpit an Iliz Santel;  
 Avel diroll a ra . . .  
 Tenn hag hir eo ar brezel!  
 Ar peoch ô Maria.\**

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\* *Douce patronne du Folgoät, Notre Mère et notre Dame. Les larmes aux yeux, Nous vous prions de tout coeur, Secourez l'église Sainte. Il y a grand vent, la lutte est dure et longue. Donnez-nous la paix, ô Maria.*

## CHAPTER XIX

### BREST AND THE ADJACENT ISLAND

BREST is an important commercial point. It has a port of renown, a military record, fine fortifications, a museum, a naval academy—all illustrative of the energy of Richelieu and Louis XIV. And to us of the United States there is the thrilling souvenir that from the harbour of Brest on July 2, 1778, sailed the fleet which bore from the King of France the recognition of the success of our cause. The World War of 1914 made of Brest a port of great activity. When America entered the war it became the principal port of debarkation.

“He is no Duke of Brittany, who is not master of Brest,” was an old saying centuries ago.

But far more interesting than Brest to the traveller is a certain island lying off against the western horizon—an island surrounded by perilous seas and full of romantic interests. It is the Island of Ouessant—scene of many shipwrecks and of much suffering. Not a tree can find root upon this

block of granite. But in spite of an ungenial Nature, Ouessant yields a sturdy race of men and women. The coif of the women reminds one of the Neapolitan. The Island of Ouessant yields no money to the treasury of France, but it furnishes the bravest and most intrepid sailors to her marine. The record of Ouessant a few years ago was: "Neither a beggar, a rogue, a rich man nor a bottle of brandy on the island." There *is* on the island a circular wall of stones called: "The Temple of the Pagans," and at one point there is a row of upright stones. These recall legends of the druidesses, which we shall mention when we visit Carnac.

The qualities of the people of Ouessant are admirable. Difficulties without danger often harden the disposition and make it selfish, while difficulties *with* danger sublimate the character and give it a romantic nature. To these people their life seems to have given a kind of noble recklessness, joined to unusual tenderness, made evident in their behavior in time of danger. Hospitality to the shipwrecked is the essential cult of these natives of Ouessant, and theft from the unhappy victims is a thing unknown. In the June of 1896 the English ship *Drummond Castle* went to pieces off this island and many of the drowned bodies were washed ashore. To one who knows that the fête costume of a woman of Finistère is made to last a lifetime, and what store she sets on her meager

supply of house linen, the scene of these peasants of Ouessant shrouding the bodies of the drowned English in their finest linen and dressing the young women and children in their own pretty costumes, suggests great sacrifice. They carved wooden crosses for each coffin, women knelt beside these, the night through, praying for the souls of the shipwrecked. The parish priest next day said mass and the burials were made in the little cemetery of the island amid the tears and prayers of the entire population. Such scenes are not unfamiliar at Ouessant, and the recitals of the heroism of its brave men and generous and tender women make of this barren granite rock a precious record of the good that is in human nature.

The sea that washes the rugged coasts of Brittany is sown with islands—each with its own especial story—often dramatic and thrilling. Stretching far out into these turbulent waters, Brittany is itself almost an island and at Pointe du Raz in Finistère, furnishes the most western point of the European continent.

Following the coast line to the north we find the island Sein, the *Sena* of the Roman historian. The passage from the Pointe du Raz to this island is dangerous, and the ancient prayer still serves the mariner of to-day: "Help me, O God, in crossing the Raz. My boat is so small and the sea is so large."

It is a bleak bit of an island and is associated

with the druidesses—for the tradition is that on this island lived the nine damsels to whom was entrusted the sacred vase of the druids. These gathered, with strict regard to planetary rule, the potent herbs which, mixed with foam of the sea, and boiled a year and a day, furnished the water of inspiration to the druidic bard. The decoction was placed in a sacred vase and three drops of this mystic brew, placed upon the lips by the hand, enabled him to behold the future.

To-day we find druidic stones survive as souvenirs of the sacred nine who inhabited the island. There are but two wells of water on the island, these to-day form the centre of social life. Young girls fill their water jugs and lean upon the railing listening to the tale of the lover. The scene reminds one of patriarchal days. In the little church the poetic Breton Angelus is still sung. But, unlike their neighbours of the island of Ouessant, alcoholism has made a footing on the isle of Sein. Every pretext for libations is improved—baptisms of babies, baptisms of ships, religious fêtes, weddings and burials. They make a pleasure of becoming intoxicated—suggesting a touch of epicureanism which Horace would have loved.

Villemarqué quotes a saying commonly employed by the imbiber of the isle of Sein—as he lifts his glass to his lips: “Within this cup which I now drain shines the entrance of the earthly Paradise.” This sentiment so coincides with Er-

nest Renan's statement concerning the tendency of the Breton to drunkenness that it is worth noting. He says: "The essential element of the Breton character is ideality—the pursuit of the unknown. His imagination is boundless. This element of the Breton nature is seen even in his tendency to drunkenness. It comes from this invincible need of illusions, not from gross appetite, for never were people less given to grossness or sensuality—*No!* the Breton seeks in his hydromel a vision of something outside himself. He forever hungers and thirsts for what is unknown and invisible."

One of the most important islands is Belle-Ile-en-Mer. The entire island is a plateau lying one hundred and fifty feet above the sea and it possesses sixty safe harbors. The soil is good and well cultivated, and the island is sown with little villages. The climate is so genial that the laurel and fig tree flourish. A romantic interest attaches itself to this island. In 1572 the Abbés of St. Croix ceded the island to Marshal de Retz (Rais), the original of the Breton Blue Beard Legends, in exchange for land on the continent. His descendant, Cardinal de Retz, brought great fortune to the island. The wit, sangfroid, elegance and love affairs of this lover of the Duchesse de Longueville are always associated with the place. When the Cardinal escaped from prison he fled to this island. Later on he sold the island to Fouquet, Louis XIV's Minister of Finance, who himself was arrested in 1661

for irregularities. He had a dream of entrenching himself at Belle-Ile and resisting Louis XIV, but awoke from his dream to find himself in the Bastille. Alexander Dumas places on this island a scene from the "Three Musketeers," and Balzac chooses it as the scene of a novel. And lastly comes Sarah Bernhardt to perch herself in one of the deserted towers of the fortifications, for her short summer holiday. The peasants of the island comprehended with difficulty the movements and habits of the "great Sarah," who, with her pet lions, dogs and other animals, her pistols, guns and target-shooting, made the island lively for these primitive folk, during every August. But her generous and tactful consideration of the needs of the people and their little churches has won the affection of her fellow islanders.

The crossing to Belle-Ile from Quiberon is difficult and must be attempted only at the discretion of the sailors, who know the perils of these waters.

## CHAPTER XX

### AUDIERNE AND THE LEGEND OF YS

RETURNING from the Isle of Sein to the mainland, we come to Audierne. Some of the letters of Robert Browning have made many familiar with this part of Brittany.

All about this bay of Douarnenez legends of these wild seas abound. No one of these is so prominent as the Legend of Ys, an ancient city which stood on the shore of the Bay of Douarnenez.

The French composer Lalo, in his opera "*Le Roi d'Ys*," makes use of a libretto of which this legend furnishes the thesis. The Legend of Ys tells us that the great King Gradlon had for his chief Councillor St. Corentin of Quimper. This Saint often visited the King at Ys and preached against the iniquities practised in that city. Now the daughter of Gradlon, Princess Dahut, was the most wicked person in the city. The peasants of Huëlgoat in Finistère still point out a gulf into which Dahut had an unpleasant habit of throwing her discarded lovers. But at last God wished

to punish the city of Ys for its crimes, and Dahut became his instrument. The gates of the dykes and locks, which protected the city from the sea, could be unlocked only by the King with a gold key which he always wore suspended about his neck. To one of her lovers Dahut had promised this key. While her father slept she stole it from his neck. Shortly after, torrents of water flooded the city! St. Guenolé hastened to Gradlon and warned him to flee. The King took his daughter but was overtaken by the waves. A terrible voice commanded Gradlon to separate himself from his daughter, who rode behind him in the saddle. The King recognized this as the voice of God. He abandoned his daughter to the waves and the waters subsided. But the City of Ys with all its inhabitants was submerged, and next day only the Bay of Douarnenez was to be seen. There is an ancient song, discovered by Villemarqué and translated by him from the Keltic into French, entitled "The Submersion of Ys," in which the horse of Gradlon is represented as a wild horse and the daughter turned into a mermaid. We give a free translation of the poem, much less poetic than it should be.

The song is in five scenes and goes thus:

#### SCENE I

"Hast thou heard? Hast thou heard what the man of God said to King Gradlon of Ys? These

are the words which the holy man said to King Gradlon of Ys: 'Beware of giving yourself up to pleasure. Beware of giving yourself up to follies. After pleasure comes grief.'

## SCENE II

King Gradlon spake unto his guests at the feast: "Oh! joyous guests, I fain would go to my chamber and sleep." Then answered him those at the feast: "Oh! King, stay with us. Stay with us yet a little. To-morrow can ye sleep. Nevertheless do what seemeth good unto thee." Then the lover whispers softly—whispers softly in the ear of the King's daughter these words: "Sweet Dahut, the key." And the Princess whispered softly, whispered softly in the ear of her lover: "The key shall be stolen—the gates that guard the city from the sea shall be unlocked. Let all things be unto thy desire."

## SCENE III

Now whosoever had seen the old King asleep in his chamber would have been moved with admiration—with admiration—seeing him asleep in his royal chamber—seeing him robed in his purple mantle—his snow-white hair floating over his shoulders and the gold chain with the golden key, about his neck.



A BRETON FISHERMAN .  
After the picture by Lucien Simon



And whosoever had been watching would have seen the white young girl entering softly, bare-footed—entering softly the chamber of the King. She draws near to the King, her father. She kneels. She steals from his neck the gold chain and the key.

## SCENE IV

He sleeps on. The King sleeps on. But a shout arises from below: "The Sea! The Sea! The Sea has burst forth! The city is submerged." (Then St. Guenolé appears.) "My Lord! Oh, King! arise, arise and mount the swiftest horse. The Sea, let loose, has burst its dykes. Cursed be the white young girl who has opened the gates of the locks of Ys—this barrier of the Sea."

## SCENE V

"Woodsman! Woodsman! tell me—hast thou seen the wild horse of King Gradlon pass through the valley?" "I have not seen the wild horse of King Gradlon pass through the valley. I only heard in the black night the sound of his hoofs: *trip-trep—trip-trep*, swift as fire." "Hast *thou* seen, oh! fisherwoman, the daughter of the Sea, the white daughter of the Sea combing her golden hair at mid-day—at mid-day, on the shore of the Sea?" "I have heard her singing, sitting on the

shore of the Sea, combing her golden hair. I have heard her singing. Her songs are as sad as the waves."

The French critics say that of the writings of Ernest Renan two bits share the honour of being the most beautiful—one of these is: "The Prayer on the Acropolis"—the other, the preface of his volume: "Souvenirs d'Enfance et de Jeunesse." The latter, from which we quote, we owe to this Breton Legend of Ys. Renan says: "One of the legends, the best known in Brittany, is that of a pretended city of Ys, which, at an unknown epoch, was swallowed up by the sea. They point out the site of this fabulous city and the fishermen tell you strange tales. On days of tempest they assure you they see in the trough of the waves the peaks of its church spires. On calm days they hear rising from its depths the sound of its bells intoning the hymn of the day."

## CHAPTER XXI

### QUIMPER, LA FAOUE, ST. FIACRE AND THE VENUS OF QUINIPILY

IT OFTEN happens to the traveller in Brittany, to encounter in unexpected places, beautiful and ancient chapels—sometimes in the depths—sometimes on the edge of a forest, sometimes standing quite alone in a field. Most of these have fallen into disuse but not into decay. A celebrated French archæologist, Fréminville, holds that as St. Louis brought architects from the Orient, we owe many of the architectural treasures of France to them. A local Breton tradition has it that several of the churches in Finistère were formerly conventual houses of the Order of the Templars and it is an established fact that the Knights of the Temple of Jerusalem had many possessions in Brittany, priories, commanderies, chapels, etc.

A mile from Landerneu we find a chapel of the sixteenth century dedicated to St. Eloi. This holy personage is represented in the liturgy of Brittany with twofold attributes of Bishop and Blacksmith. He is one of the patron saints of horses.

And now, although there are many other places of interest in the region about Landerneu, we must leave them behind and take train for Quimper, our next objective point. This, like all Breton towns, has its local legends. Chief of these is that of St. Corentin, who went into retirement at Plomodiern near Quimper. Here occurred the miracle of the fish, a morsel of which he ate daily, the remainder resuming at once its entirety. No wonder he became Bishop of the Diocese. This was in the fifth century. St. Corentin is to-day the patron of the town, and its lovely cathedral is dedicated to his name. This dates from the twelfth century. Tombs of dukes, archbishops and numerous knights and ladies line the outer aisles, and the panels of the granite pulpit represent various episodes in the life of the Saint.

It is at Quimper that we purchase the Breton faïence, which is so popular with artists and which has come to be considerably known in the United States. The river Odet runs through the principal street of the town, the favourite promenade of the citizens being along the banks. From our windows of the hotel we see the women washing their linen in the stream as their mothers and grandmothers did in their time.

From Quimper we will make a little excursion into the mountainous part of Brittany. The Black and the Aréz mountains, we should call them hills, offer picturesque scenery, and the people are more

primitive in their ideas than those on the coasts. Folk-Lorists find many curious tales and songs in the mountains of Arez, where they are still sung in the Breton language.

La Faouët is one of the interesting places which we shall find in this side-journey. And there is Carhaix, birthplace of the First Grenadier of France, and if one's visit chance to coincide with its fête on the last Sunday in August, the place of the famous wrestling matches. And Pontivy with its ruined castle of the Rohans.

The presiding saint of La Faouët is St. Fiacre, patron of horticulturists. It has come about that Fiacre is also the patron of the Paris cabbies—in this way. Long ago an Irishman named Savage brought to Paris many plants hitherto unknown in France—in fact he gave a great impetus to horticulture in that country. He chose for his patron St. Fiacre. A compatriot of his later on inaugurated a line of public carriages and on every one, in compliment to his fellow Irishman, the face of St. Fiacre was painted, as a distinguishing feature of his undertaking. This caused the vehicle itself to take the name of the Patron Saint of Horticulture—thus sharing in the protection of a saint always honoured in Paris as well as in Brittany.

Our next point of interest is Quimperlé. This town possesses most interesting churches, is altogether a charming place, planted amidst verdure and flowers in the valley of the two rivers; the

Ellé and the Isole, which, after their juncture, take the name La Laïta. Everything about the place is as pretty as are the names of its rivers, and Quimperlé fairly deserves the title given it: "The Arcady of Lower Brittany."

In the court of a château near Le Faouët, of which nothing now remains but the entrance gateway, we find by far the most curious archæological object in the Province—"The Venus of Quinipily." It is six feet high, and its origin has served as a perpetual puzzle to the archæologists. Some believe it to be an Egyptian statue, others a Roman—Prosper Merimée places it in the sixteenth century—but the majority of savants to-day believe it to be of a more ancient date. M. Cayot Delandre insists that it is an Isis; it has the Egyptian characteristics: the stiffness of pose, the material, the coiffure and stole. He accounts for its presence where it now stands thus: Certain Oriental legions were incorporated in the Roman army which guarded the mountains of Caster nec, in this region where archæologists place the Roman station of Sulis. These Oriental legions brought with them their Goddess or Divinity for protection from danger.

The Bretons call this statue "Groach er Gouard"—(Sorceress of the Guard)—a name which dates from a remote period. This statue has been venerated by the Bretons for hundreds of years. It was especially invoked by husbands and wives desirous

of having children. The clergy disapproved of the cult and threw the statue into the river, where it lay for a century or more. The Bretons then recovered it and the cult was resumed; they were about to demolish it when the Count owning the château—himself something of an archæologist—rescued it, and placed it on a pedestal in the court of his château—and there the Isis stands solitary in its lonely environment—an Isis in this strangely Roman Catholic country—is indeed an anachronism. No one has been able to decipher the characters engraved on the forehead (L. I. I. or I. L. I., or something similar.)

The costume of the women of Quimperlé thrills all feminine Brittany with the same emotions that a Doucet or Paquin gown inspires in the heart of some of us.

Lastly Quimperlé boasts of an excellent hotel—the Lion d'Or, where everything essential is to be found—even to the *ghost* which walks at midnight through the main corridor.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE COUNTRY OF "GUENN"

FROM Quimperlé we drive to the two little towns made familiar to us, under fictitious names—years ago—through Blanche Willis Howard's story of "Guenn." The book so thoroughly describes these two places that we need not repeat. In fact a traveller visiting Pont-Aven and Concarneau is likely to find himself verifying the book at every turn. The mistress of the Hotel des Voyageurs described so perfectly in the book thus: "Madame had the air of a Roman matron in a Breton coif"—is still living not far from her little hotel and she tells us many interesting things sitting with us over our coffee at one of the tables outside. Tells us how the author of the book, which was written in the corner room up one flight, used to inveigle her into long conversations, she herself little suspecting that she was being put into a story. Nor did she know her fate until ten years after the book was printed, when an American arriving in Concarneau drew from his pocket the "Tauchnitz," and pro-

ceeded to verify its characters, beginning with Madame herself. She tells us of the good curé of the Lannions in the story, how on stormy nights he used to light his lantern and search along the rocky shores of his island for the shipwrecked—how he worked among his fisher folk and shared his food and money with them, visiting the sick, comforting the afflicted. He died only a few years ago—died on his island among his people—instead of wandering off to Rome and immuring himself in a cloister as the story has it. And our "Roman matron in a coif" takes us to see "Guenn"—the veritable "Guenn" of the story, who escaped the drowning of the last chapter only to marry a "ne'er-do-well." We drive to the house in a shabby quarter of the town, and are told that "Guenn" is at the *lavoir* doing the family washing. Thither we go. The scene seems little changed to-day. The women bend over their pile of linen; the paddles and the tongues are all going together; rows of many-colored and much patched garments hang over the hedges drying in the sun. Only the actors in the scene are changed—of the old group described in the book—only "Guenn" remains. She bends over the soiled linen of her pathetic *ménage*. She soaps and paddles, but she does not sing as of old—not even her "wicked little song" does she sing. She looks up from her paddling—seeks Madame of the Voyageurs, always a stanch friend—in the book and out of it—and she

comes. The years have made havoc of the lines of her face. There is nothing left of the flashing exuberant child. Poverty and discipline have had their way. But in the pathetic face turned up to us we find a pair of fine eyes—tired-looking they are, but still full of expression, and we sigh: Poor little “Guenn”!

On a lovely summer afternoon at Nizon, which is near Pont-Aven, the sound of the vesper bells of the ancient church recalled this old song. It is supposed to be sung by a young Breton of the parish of Nizon and portrays the naïve and delicate wooing of the Breton youth.

“All of the household have gone to the *aire neuve*,  
I also must go with them to the fête:

Ring, bells of Nizon—ring, ring.

There was no lack of young men at the fête  
Nor of pretty girls was there lack.

Ring, bells of Nizon—ring, ring.

My heart beat when I heard the binions playing,  
Then I saw a young girl dancing:  
She was as sweet as a turtle dove.

Ring, bells of Nizon—ring, ring.

Her eyes shone like drops of dew on the  
Blossom of the white thorn at the dawning of the  
day.

Ring, bells of Nizon—ring, ring.

And they were blue like the flower of the flax,  
Her teeth were as beautiful as precious stones.

Ring, bells of Nizon—ring, ring.

And she was full of life and joy. And she looked  
At me. And I—I looked at her. And I went to  
her

To invite her—— To invite her for the gavotte.

Ring, bells of Nizon—ring, ring.

And as we danced together

—As we danced I pressed her little

White hand. And she began to smile—

To smile as sweetly as an angel in Paradise.

And I began to smile at her. And from

That moment I love only her.

Ring, bells of Nizon—ring, ring.

To-night at twilight I shall go to her, and I

Shall take to her a velvet ribbon and a cross,

A band of velvet and a cross. Oh! how it will

Glisten on her little bare throat, and I

Will take to her a silver ring to put upon

Her pretty little finger—

To put upon her finger that she may sometimes  
think of me.

Ring, bells of Nizon—ring, ring!"

## CHAPTER XXIII

### BRIZEUX—THE NATIONAL POET OF BRITTANY

LEAVING Concarneau, an hour by train brings us to Lorient. As a town, the place contains little of interest. It is ugly, modern and commercial. But there is one spot here to which the faithful pilgrim is sure to turn. Not for its beauty of surrounding, for the cemetery of Lorient shares the ugliness of the town. But in this cemetery is the tomb of Brittany's national poet—Brizeux.

To know the poems of Brizeux is to know the Bretons and Lower Brittany. They record the traits and customs of his people. In these verses the poet sings of his youth, of the little "Morie" of the Pardons, the fête of St. Jean, the songs of the bards, the tales of the beggars—of the fairies and dolmens and legends of his country. His "Sea-Gulls," a song sung by the young girls of Le Croisic as their lovers depart on their long voyage, is perhaps the most popular of the poems of Brizeux.

At the inauguration of the Statue of Brizeux at

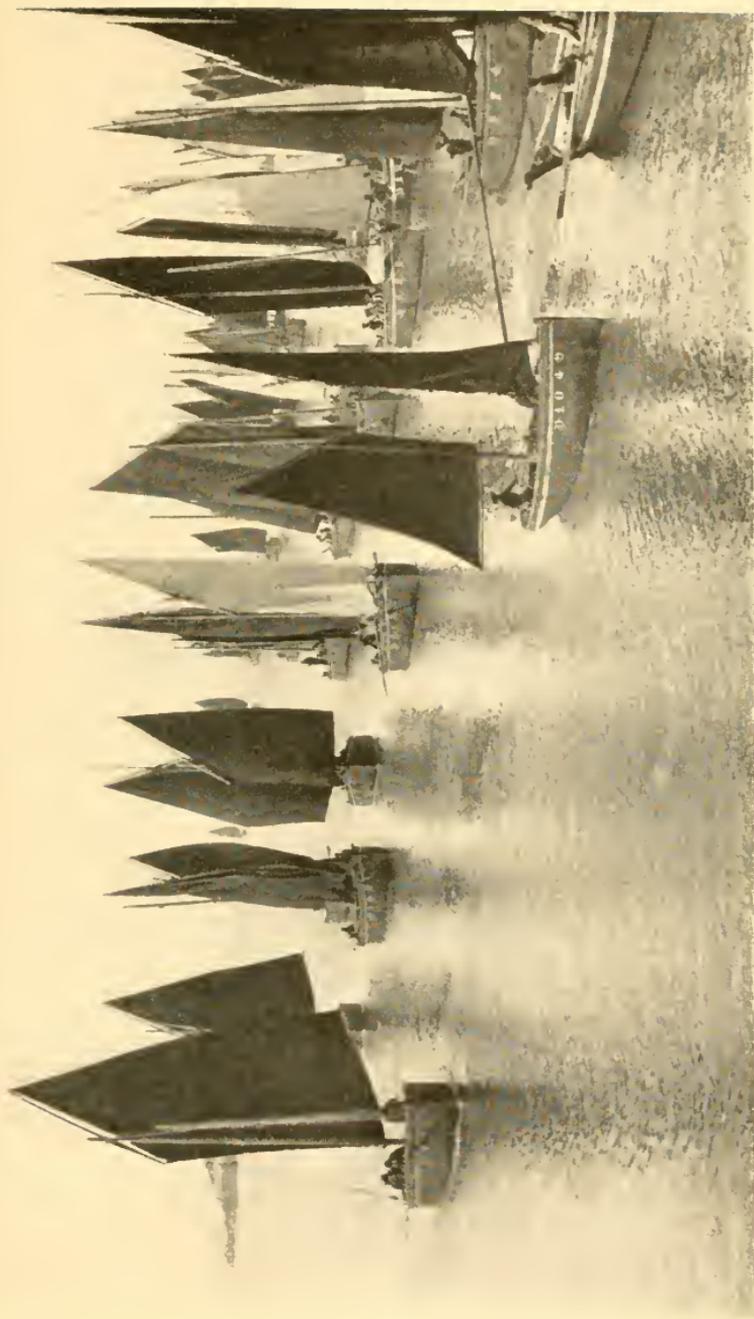


PHOTO BY FRANCES N. GOSTLING

FISHING BOATS OF CONCARNEAU



Lorient in 1888, Ernest Renan in his discourse, in such exquisite French which even translation into English does not rob of its beauty, said: "It has been said that Brizeux made Brittany known to France. It is perhaps saying too much. But he certainly portrays one exquisite thing among others—and that is—Breton love—wise, tender, profound and faithful—with its delicate touch of mysticism. In the poem 'Morie' he shows us two young people passing hours together without speaking a word, hers a sweet, modest, rosy face under a little white coif—nothing more—for Brizeux that suffices. What adorable simplicity of means!—no jewels, no costumes—scarcely flowers—mere color is useless—the black and white of the peasant of Finistère suffice to set off the richness of a virginal tint. The effect of beauty obtained by charm. This is the triumph of the Breton esthetic—therein is the art of Brizeux."

Some years ago we celebrated at Lorient the centennial of the birth of Brizeux. It required three days to complete the ceremonies which included a requiem mass in the church, a gala performance at the theatre, processions to the house where the poet was born in 1803, to his statue on the public square, and to his tomb. At all three places the poets recited their verses, and the bards sang their songs. Garden parties with national dances and binion playing and a final banquet combined to restore to the people of Lorient the souve-

nirs of the poet who is more dear to the bards of Brittany than any other of the Breton poets.

Visiting the tomb of Brizeux, we are glad that his wish, expressed in the "Song of the Oak" (recalling the druidic bards of old Armorica), has been carried out, and the description written thereon reads: "He sang of his country and made it beloved."

## CHAPTER XXIV

### HENNEBONT AND THE BALLAD OF JEANNE DE MONTFORT

FROM Lorient we travel by train for a half-hour and arrive at Hennebont. The old town is interesting to-day because of its medieval streets and houses and its beautiful Gothic church. But Hennebont tells an ancient story—one of the most romantic in Breton history. That of Jeanne de Montfort, a very intrepid woman of the fifteenth century, who gave a Jeanne d'Arc to Brittany, eighty-five years before France found her own Maid of Orleans.

During the one hundred years war in the fourteenth century the Duchy of Brittany was claimed by both the Count of Montfort, half-brother of Duke John III of Brittany, and Charles of Blois, nephew of Philippe le Bel, King of France. At one moment Brittany was without a leader. The Duke of Montfort had been captured in battle and imprisoned in the Louvre at Paris. Brittany, in her helplessness, was in danger of turning to Charles

of Blois. The Countess Jeanne de Montfort was at Rennes when she learned of the imprisonment of her husband. After a period of grief she took courage and set out as a soldier. A fourteenth century militant was our Jeanne de Montfort! Carrying her baby in her arms she went to the Parliament of her Province where she inspired all with hope and courage, after which she goes on horseback through Lower Brittany putting garrisons in order and prepares her army. Charles of Blois, in the spring of 1342, starts out with *his* army, thinking to make an easy conquest of a country without a leader. But Jeanne had foreseen everything and was ready for him. Never had the hour and the woman so coincided in the annals of Brittany.

She came to the town we are now visiting—Hennebont. She sent messengers to England to seek aid of Edward III. Froissart's story has it that Jeanne herself went upon this mission and tells how she arrived at the Court at the moment when the King was giving a fête to his favourite, the Countess of Salisbury. Such is the authority which true courage lends. When Jeanne de Montfort was announced the knights strove for the privilege of being first to salute her. The Countess of Salisbury kissed the hand that had learned to carry a sword, and at once, under the inspiration of the scene, Edward promised to Jeanne de Montfort the aid of forty-six ships.

In this intelligent Duchess of Brittany, we find our heroine as redoubtable under the helmet as she had been charming under the "hennin" (the tall, conical head-dress of the period) managing the sword as she had managed the distaff.

We see her entrenched behind her fortifications on the heights of Hennebont, and the town besieged by Charles of Blois and his army. From a loophole of the western tower she watches for the arrival of the English ships, meanwhile instructing her soldiers and resisting the siege. Then at the last moment the fleet arrives—the ships of King Edward with six thousand archers. Froisart tells us (precious old gossip that he is!) how Jeanne kissed each brave captain on both cheeks and praised him in turn.

We see her surprise the camp of the enemy, through stratagem—rescuing her soldiers held as prisoners. Finally Charles of Blois is obliged to abandon the siege of Hennebont—and all because of a woman! The incredible audacity of our heroine in going in person to set fire to the enemy's camp earned for her the title: "Jeanne-la-Flamme" and the episode furnished material for a popular song bearing that title, the translation of which from the Keltic into French we owe to M. Villemarqué. Add to this our own into English and one realizes how much the flavor of the song has been sacrificed. The story is given in four parts or scenes.

## SCENE I

“What is this which I behold, clinging to the heights of Hennebont? Is it a flock of black sheep which I see in the distance?—It is not a flock of black sheep. It is an army—a French army on the march—marching to lay siege to the town of Hennebont.”

## SCENE II

When the Countess Jeanne made the tour of the town at the head of her soldiers all the bells of Hennebont were set ringing. When she rode upon her white steed with her child upon her knee, all the people of Hennebont shouted with joy: “May God protect mother and son and may He put to route the French.” As the procession came to an end they heard the French army shouting: “And now we come. We come to capture every living soul of the town of Hennebont. We come to capture the hind and her fawn. We have chains of gold wherewith to bind them one to the other.”

Then answered Jeanne la-Flamme from the top of her tower: “It is not the hind who will be captured. As to the wicked wolf, that I will not say. If to-night the wolf is cold, it is I who will warm his den.” And having thus spoken, she descended, furious. And she put on a corset of steel. And she coiffed herself in a black helmet. And she armed

herself with a sharp-edged sword. And, carrying in her hand a flaming torch, she set out from one of the gates of the town.

### SCENE III

Now the French were singing gaily as they were seated at table. Gathered together in their closed tents, the French were singing gaily in the night. When in the distance might have been heard a strange voice—a strange voice singing in solemn tones: “More than one now eating white bread will soon be biting the cold black earth. More than one who now boasts shall soon be reduced to ashes.”

Many were lying—overcome with much drinking—their heads upon the tables, when the alarm was sounded: “Fire! Fire! It is Jeanne-la-Flamme! forsooth, the most daring woman in all France!”

Jeanne-la-Flamme had set blazing the four corners of the French camp, and the wind spread the flames and illumined the black night, and the tents were burned and the French consumed—three thousand reduced to ashes and only a hundred escaped.

### SCENE IV

Now Jeanne-la-Flamme, next morning, stood smiling at the top of her tower. Looking down upon the plain and seeing the French camp de-

stroyed and the smoke still rising from the tents reduced to embers—said Jeanne-la-Flamme: “Mon Dieu! What a splendid tillage! Mon Dieu! What a splendid tillage! For every grain of barley we shall have ten. The old Romans said truly: “There is nothing so good as the bones of Gauls—nothing so good as the bones of Gauls—ground fine—for *making the barley grow.*”

The hatred of the French name flashes out horribly in this song and suggests the wild beast—long-hunted, turning at last upon his destroyers. This was indeed the position of Brittany in respect to France.

Froissart, in describing the exploits of Jeanne de Montfort, accentuates no act of hers so rudely as does this ancient song. But this War of the Succession was on both sides remarkable for its cruelty. As always in the Middle Age, side by side existed the sentiment of chivalry, the fervor of Christianity and the ferocity of barbaric times, and in judging of Jeanne de Montfort we must place her in her times.

But we must descend from our heights of Hennebont and its bellicose souvenirs and rearrange our dispositions entirely. For our next journey leads us on a pious pilgrimage to St. Anne d'Auray. Pilgrimages of great importance occur here twice a year—one in the week following Whitsunday, the other on St. Anne's Day, the twenty-sixth of July.

While the Pardon of St. Yves at Tréguier honours the national Saint—the Church Calendar that of St. Anne, which is more thronged by devotees of the Mother of the Virgin and Auray being a central point, the pilgrims flock from all quarters, and the traveller has the valuable opportunity of seeing a greater variety of costumes than at any other gathering.

## CHAPTER XXV

### CARNAC AND LEGENDS OF THE DRUIDS

WE NEXT come to Carnac—the cradle of Gallic Druidism. *Our* first impression was received under a windy night sky, the moon now and then lifting the somber shadows of the plain. Grey stones of various heights and dimensions stand mute and solemn. Some of them in long rows—here and there a menhir towers above the others. The remains of a cromlech—the sacred circle outlined at one end of the plain. We wander among these queer grey stones and recall the legends associated with them. Especially on such a night, under this varying sky, does fancy create weird pictures in the midst of the uncertain shadows. We conjure forms of druidic priestesses as pictured in the legends—their soft white woollen robes floating in the night wind, their bracelets and girdles of gold gleaming in the moonlight, the wreath of mystic verveine on their heads—armed with torches—dancing their swinging, swaying dance. Jubanivelle of the Sorbonne, the acknowl-



PHOTO BY FRANCES N. GOSTLING

THE ALIGNMENTS, CARNAC



edged authority, tells us that the Stones of Carnac—although *employed* by the druids in practicing their ceremonies, were *placed* where they now stand thousands of years before the druids came into Gaul. Their origin remains a mystery. These stones tell no tales. There are no inscriptions—no hieroglyphics to decipher. Even the “grey cult,” as druidism has been named, is nearly obliterated by the three thousand years that have swept over it, and fancy must now serve as magician to conjure pictures of its strange and unexplained past. A few stanzas of their chief bard Taliesin,—whose mystical poems are believed by some to be derived from the sources of druidism—and some of the laws and customs and beliefs of this strange people, exist to-day. Some of the laws which have been preserved are interesting. Cæsar wrote: “It is a law of the druids that no man shall be richer than his neighbour.” Other laws were: “Do not discuss religion among yourselves.” “The druid shall be pure and chaste.” “Be mute in presence of a stranger.” “Women may be judges and arbiters.” “Foreign merchants are forbidden to import luxuries among us.” “Usury is a theft and you owe the usurer nothing.” “Marry your wife without a dowry.” “No children shall be brought up in cities. The child shall be brought up in the villages, otherwise the Republic has no use for him.” “A man at the age of twenty-five having too large a waist-line shall be put to death

for gluttony." Some of these laws certainly suggest the ideas of Emersonian "plain living and high thinking" among these men of oak. It is said that with the druids there were seven senses, appetite and aversion being admitted to the number—hence perhaps the phrase: "frightened out of his seven senses."

Through the few fragments that have survived savants have sought to solve the mystery of the cult practiced among these stones, but Carnac keeps the secret of her grandeur—lugubrious and silent. Robert Browning, in the sixteenth stanza of the "Two Poets of Croisic," writes—alluding to the desire to know the secret of these stones: "Each pale man importunes—vainly, the mumbling to speak plain once more."

On the sixteenth of September—sometimes on the fifteenth, if the day chance to be a Sunday, the Pardon of St. Cornely occurs at Carnac. What a great Saint is Cornely! For he not only saved Carnac by turning the invading Roman soldiers to stone—do we not see these thousands of upright stones still standing as witnesses to the miracle?—But St. Cornely is also the guardian of horned cattle. After High Mass of the day of the fête—the cattle, decked with ribbons and flowers, are brought to the door of the church—there the clergy in gorgeous vestments, the altar boys swinging the burning censers, bless the cattle and sprinkle them with holy water. The cattle are then

driven to the market and sold at auction. The owners often bid them in themselves. The presence of one of these cattle preserves an entire herd from disease. A strange custom—named the nocturnal cult.

Notwithstanding endless sanctifications the ancient beliefs connected with the stones persist, but under new names. The menhirs, dolmens and rocking stones scattered through Brittany are sought to-day for various purposes.

To cite several instances. On the Island of Sein persons with fever send to have placed at the foot of the menhir nine pebbles which must be brought in the pocket handkerchief of the sick person. Whoever takes away these pebbles takes the fever, thus ridding the patient of his malady.

At Locmariaquer, near Carnac, a young girl wishing to marry within the year climbs to the top of the highest menhir on the night of the first of May, gathers up her skirts and slides down to the ground. In Ille-et-Vilaine a similar practice exists—married people visit these stones to cure sterility. At Plouet (Côtes-du-Nord) there is a famous stone of this class. Often bits of ribbon or woollen stuff are placed on the stone as offerings—newly married couples seek the menhir of Plouarzel, the largest in Finistère. Through the rites practised there the husband believes he will be the father of boys rather than girls.

If engaged couples utter their vows across dol-

mens, which have certain ruts on their surface, and gather the herbs growing beneath the stones, the marriage will be a happy one. Most of the rites practised at druidistic stones have to do with love and fecundity, and are performed clandestinely. The fact that these stones have acquired a degree of polish at certain places attest to the frequency of these rites.

Near the Bourg of Plouaret is a dolmen surmounted by a small chapel named "The Chapel of the Seven Saints." An ancient popular guerz of the country celebrated there the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus. The Church has appropriated the title of the Chapel to the Seven Saints, either the seven who came over from Ireland or to a group of seven early Breton Saints.

At the grotto of Abèlard and Heloïse young girls break a bit from one of the stones in order to be married within the year.

Of the eighty Rocking Stones found in France, fifteen are in the Côtes-du-Nord, and there are a number in Morbihan and Finistère.

Until 1880 these stones were held to be the work of man. To-day it is believed that they belong to geology by their origin and to archæology by their use. Legends attribute the placing of these stones to fairies, monk-lore gives the credit to the Virgin and to Satan. These stones often serve as ordeals. Jealous husbands seek that near Concarneau in order to solve their doubts. There are traditions of

two fêtes formerly celebrated at rocking stones, one on the first of May, the other at harvest time.

Many of the large boulders along the coast are called Gargantua's pebbles, the giant having been annoyed by these stones getting into his shoes, and casting them aside here and there.

Formerly stones in Brittany increased in size miraculously, but they have been exorcised, since when they no longer gain in proportion. As in other countries, certain rocks in Brittany sing; one on a high point named *Men-Varia* is often heard singing at sunrise.\* I have visited the rock of Ploumanach which sings at sunset. The people say it is the sweet voice of Mary, protector of the mariner, praying for her Bretons.

In the river at Scaër the Bretons search for the stones of the Cross. On every one the sacred symbol is found in relief. That the geologists call them *Staurotites* has not yet lessened their real value. Every household desiring to avoid colic, sorcery and mad dogs, possess one or more of these stones, which also serve as amulets when travelling.

From Carnac to Locmariaquer we travel by private conveyance. Locmariaquer possesses a wonderful dolmen and interesting Roman remains, and not far off is the mound on which is a curious crom-

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\*It is said that treasures are often found under the singing rocks, but we are told that they are Satanic in origin and disaster is sure to overtake him who ventures to dig to find these treasures. At Trogaredic, near Morlaix, there is gold in a certain place in the earth, but he who searches for it will fare ill in this world and the next.

lech. Alexander Dumas places the tragic death of his Porthos in the grotto of Locmariaquer.

At the little inn one should not fail to order oysters, the specialty of the place. These our hostess allowed us to enjoy, sitting in the kitchen before the broad fireplace, thus being served directly from the coals where the broiling goes on at the hands of our hostess.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### LEGENDS

FOUNTAINS share the popularity of stones in the legends. There is a famous one at Yffiniac near St. Briec, called the "Fountain of the Seven Saints." This is efficacious in cases of eczema. That of St. Malo in Bréhand cures boils. The water of the fountain of St. Guéten is a specific for colic, and St. Blanche for skin eruptions (but the shirt must be dipped in the fountain and dried in the shade and prayers said during the drying, also an *offering* must not be omitted). St. Blaise is a specialist for toothache, Nôtre Dame de la Clarté for diseases of the eye and Nôtre Dame de Bon Repos for insomnia. The Virgin at Quintin cures sterility and idiots and epileptics are helped at the fountain of the St. Esprit at Plédeliac. For earache the Breton seeks Nôtre Dame de Lorette. St. Aubert cures hydrophobia and St. Antoine aids in finding lost objects.

Besides the Saints and their fountains the Breton has three curative resources—the Midwife, the Bonesetter and the Sorcerer.

The midwife is actively engaged, there being—according to statistics—no Province in France in which so many large families are found.

The bonesetter appears to have a method all his own, and his successes as well as his failures are evident. At Ploumanach the usual fee for a simple fracture is one franc—for a double fracture two, and a complicated case is held to be worth the three francs demanded.

When all other resources fail, there is the Sorcerer, who is feared, respected, sought or avoided, according to circumstances. Many a Breton curé possesses a copy of the "Agrippa." But it is forbidden his parishioners to own such an aid to knowledge. However, every Sorcerer in the Province has a copy. I have seen one, owned by M. Anatole Le Braz, given him by an old peasant. The book is black from its century of hiding inside his grandfather's chimney, lest the curé should know of its existence. The formulas contained in this book and the herbs he gathers, as did the druids, with proper observation of the planetary movements, are great aids to the Sorcerer. Some of the remedies used by them, in the mountains of Arez, have been, it is said, transmitted orally from father to son, and are held to be traditional means of cure employed by the orates. There is excellent sense in this recipe: "To restore a fatigued horse shut him in the stable three days and give six sous to the Curé."

To ease the sufferings of one possessed by the Loup Garou, repeat four times the syllable "at," twice the syllable "non" and four times "on all en an."

In Brittany Sage and Sorcerer are often synonymous. People smile at the Breton Sorcerers, but in Paris we find them on the Rue Paradis, and in London in Bond Street.

With the druids water and fire figure largely, as forces in the Substance of the Universe. As his ancestors lighted fires on the *cairns* at the Solstice, so the Bretons light bonfires on the mountains on the Eve of St. John's Day. And the priest now blesses and often lights the pile. Young people dance around these fires and leap across the embers for good luck, and a brand preserved from the fire of St. Jean brings a blessing to the house through the year. A most delightful description of this midsummer-night fête is given in the book: "Au Pays des Pardons." In fact one finds in this a perfect guide and inspiration as well, in journeying in this Country of Pilgrimages.

Luzel publishes over twenty Sun legends. A few years ago the Patron or chief person of the Fête of the Solstice wore a rosette of green, blue and white ribbon, these colours, curiously, are those of the Welsh bards, druids and ovates. In some localities he was dressed entirely in these colors. They danced around the dolmen. Persons under sixteen years of age were not admitted to this fête,

and once married their right to participate ended. The Patron of the preceding fête lost his position when another succeeded in seizing from him the tri-colored rosette, when *he* was proclaimed chief or Patron of the fête. The observance of the Fête of the Solstice lingers in the mountains, where the Keltic spirit remains comparatively intact. The center of the Cult is near Plougasnou in Finistère, where the touching of the finger of St. John, treasured in the sacristy, joined to the use of the water of the fountain, cures the worst cases of disease of the eye. This fête has become spoiled to a degree, owing to its popularity, and I grieve to say that at the moment of the lighting of the bonfires, volleys of musketry accompany the ceremony.

As for trees and plants, the oak holds its usual place in Breton traditions. A branch of the birch-tree is a signal of triumph, and the hazel-nut tree symbolizes defeat. The curious object—the *maël benniquet*—was made of the heart of the oak.

The mistletoe figures in many of the legends. A panacea with the druids, it possesses (provided it grows upon the oak) great healing powers. An expatriated Breton finds the *gui de chêne* "warranted to cure nervous complaints," at a large apothecary shop near the Hôtel de Ville in Paris, at six francs the pound; a branch of mistletoe carried on a railway train wards off accident.

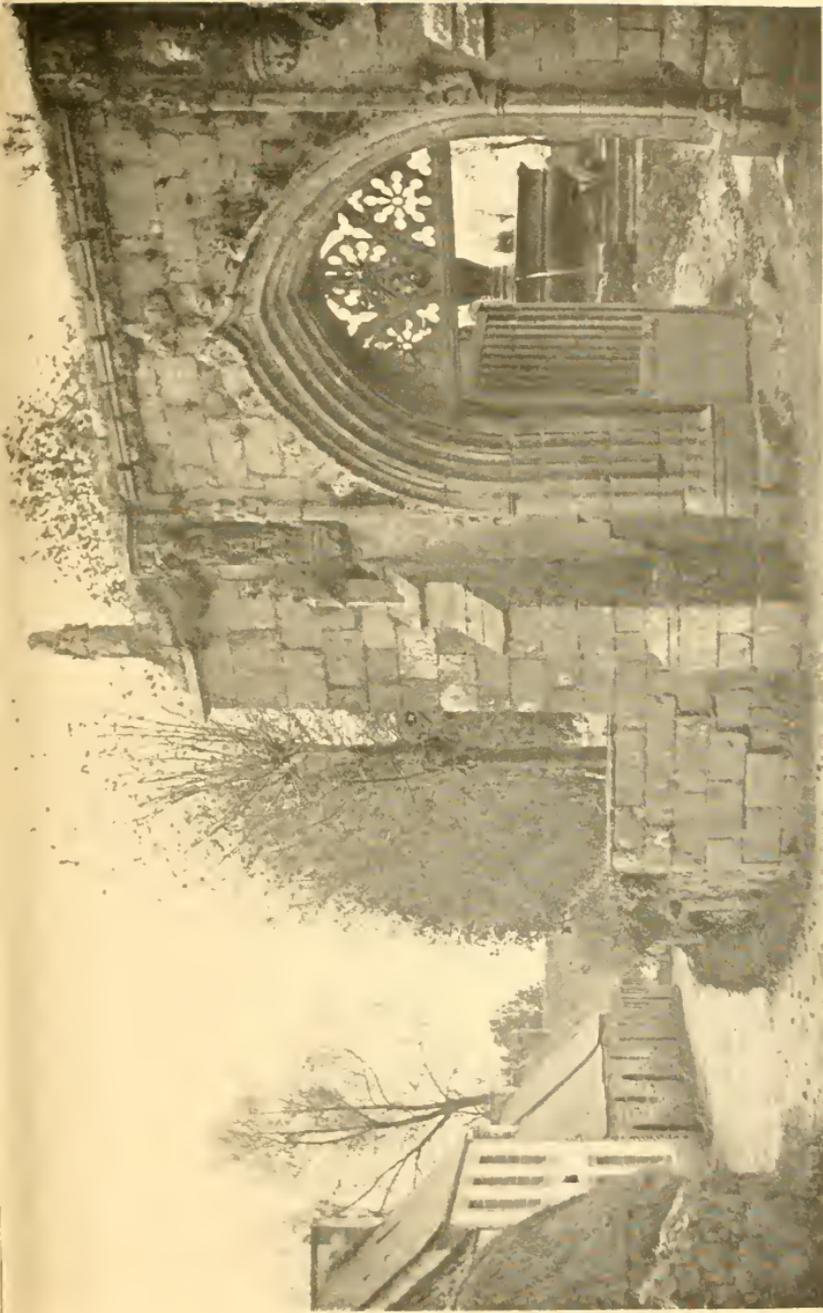


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THE MIRACULOUS FOUNTAIN OF SAINT JEAN DU DOIGT



## CHAPTER XXVII

### SAINTS AND FAIRIES

IN SPEAKING of the fountains we have mentioned a few names of the Patron Saints, not many of these are found in the Calendar of Rome. Brittany counts her Saints by hundreds, although those of Rome are likewise honoured—as if there couldn't be too many. Nor does Albert the Monk of Morlaix mention the half in his "Lives of the Saints of Brittany."

M. Anatole Le Braz tells of a Saint—very popular—called in Breton "a zantic coz"—"the little old Saint"—an old block of wood against which one has only to rub his head in order to obtain all that he desires. But there are obstacles, as the block is concealed in a rock which opens once in every eleven hundred years, between eleven o'clock and midnight!

The name of St. Tu-pe-du does not figure in the Monk's book, but he is important among the Breton Saints. Another legend having one point in common with that of St. Tu-pe-du, very Keltic

and very lugubrious, is that of the *Maël benniquet* of *Manne-Guen*. "The Sacred Club of the White Mountain." On the side of the Mountain in the country near Poulder, is a chapel of the Virgin named Notre Dame de Mané-Guen. People say that formerly, old men tired of living went to the top of the mountain, and one of the druids who lived there disembarassed him by striking his head with the *maël benniquet*.

The Sacred Club of the druids, made of the heart of oak, later on took the form of a mallet of wood, afterwards of iron, lastly of a granite ball, half a yard in circumference.

In certain chapels the *maël benniquet* is preserved, usually concealed in an aperture of the wall of the sacristy. In case an aged person was suffering a slow and painful death, the sacristan entrusted this granite ball to some venerable friend of the dying—sometimes the parish priest has performed the office. It was placed on the head of the sufferer, a sacred formula was uttered and death came swiftly and painlessly. Thus Christianity has sanctified the *maël benniquet* of druidic legend and preserved its benignant character, and the Mountain *Mané-Guen* is placed under the protection of Notre Dame.

This mountain is near Guidel at the mouth of the Laïta. It still preserves its ancient tradition (and for centuries the chapel of *Mané-Guen* treasured a *maël-benniquet*) and is still a place of pilgrim-

age, but—note the contrast!—to-day, young girls desirous of becoming more beautiful and attractive seek there the intercession of Our Lady of *Mané-Guen!*

As we before mentioned, the peasants have always loved their fairies, and did not easily believe them to be Pagan. Not that they were held to be quite Christian, as they could not be baptized. But they can enter a church, act as godmother, and assist at marriages. They are neither quite Christian nor quite Pagan, but rather spirits of angels condemned to do penance on earth after which they will enter Paradise. Chapels have been built by fairies in a single night. Enormous crosses and stones have been transported and placed by them—always in the night. Also the fairies sometimes say a mass. The dolmen is called the “Church of the Fairies.”

Certain Norman historians indicate Brittany as the chief sojourn of the fairy. The soil has always been congenial to their existence. In the mountains of Arez the forests are filled with these good little folk. The bad fairy dwells in the grotto of the coast, which forms four-fifths of the boundary of our Province. There Morgan-la-Fée still practises her enchantments. The inhabitants of Tréguier often see this Breton siren, and Mary Morgan is well known on the shore of Finistère. These successors of ancient sea divinities figure in endless songs, and old tales. M. Sibéllot has col-

lected twenty stories of these fairies of the grotto.

In the mountains of Arez it is wise to avoid certain crossings of roadways, and certain fountains in forests, and especially certain dolmens where fairies dance their rounds. The people tell you that they have themselves heard that famous uncanny rondo—“*Lundi, Mardi, Mercredi,*” and the others respond: “*et Jeudi et Vendredi.*” If the passer-by venture to add: “*et Samedi,*” he runs a fearful risk. A rag-gatherer passing near a dolmen one cold night in December, and hearing this singing couldn’t resist adding the fatal word. He was immediately surrounded by these sprites of the night, was hurled into the clouds and landed in the moon, where he figures as the “Man” of that orb, and there he must remain until the spell is broken, i.e.—until another victim, led into the same imprudence shall replace him.

I found a pretty local legend at Gourin in the Arez mountains, so buried was it in the hearts of the inhabitants of the parish that it had escaped even the folk-lorists.

During a visit at the château of Gourin I noticed in the little cemetery of the ancient church a flat tombstone, quite new in appearance, resting on two pediments which were apparently very, very old. They explained that the former slab had become so worn by the feet of the little children whose mothers had brought them to the tomb, that the parish had been forced to replace it with the

new slab. My look of inquiry brought the full explanation. "Hundreds of years ago a certain Curé of the parish was greatly beloved by his people, and above all by the children, as he adored the little folk of his parish. Now this good priest had a weakness. When once he had fallen asleep, after his day of hard work, it was with difficulty that he could rouse himself. Once in the middle of the night some one knocked at his door, asking him to hasten to baptize a newly born infant about to die. The Curé promised to come at once—but alas! he failed to rouse himself—relaxed into sleep. The child died. His grief over the loss of a soul through his neglect was too much to be borne. He thought himself unworthy of his sacred office—and one night he left his parish—walked to the nearest seaport and embarked for Ireland. Just before landing he found that in his haste he had brought with him the key of the Sacristy. This he threw into the sea, thus severing the last link which bound him to his parish. He worked faithfully among the poor and suffering, devoting himself especially to little children, and came to be looked upon in the country of his adoption as little less than a saint. After many years, as he was supping one day at a little inn on the seacoast, inside the fish which was served to him he found the key of the Sacristy. He interpreted the miracle thus: this his period of penance was finished, and he was to return to his parish. Arriving there, his people

were overjoyed at sight of their beloved Curé, whose absence they had never ceased to mourn—and he lived to a very old age, and at his death was buried in the parish cemetery. He had become such a saint that miracles were wrought at his tomb. If an infant was unable from weakness to walk at the usual time, the mother brought it to this tomb and, marching the little feet back and forth on the slab of the stone, the child's strength was secured. Thus the stone became worn and the grooves grew so deep that a new one was made to replace it. I give this as a typical local legend—believed in absolutely by the people. And at the same time not far from being historically true. For mostly legends are history—history veiled by the myth, it is true—but still history.

There are many Legends of Love—beauties persecuted, etc.

Luzel associates this class with the Psyche myth and thus analyzes it: "Generally a condition at first obscure or unhappy of the heroine followed by a better condition as the result of some act of devotion, filial or conjugal—a fall or misfortune follows, due often to curiosity—expiatory tests, redemption and definite reunion of hero and heroine." Luzel cites six examples. Other legends of love are found in which several but not all the conditions named by Luzel occur.

There are two heroines of legends of this class, named Azénor—"Azénor la Pâle," sacrificed by a

marriage forced upon her from motives of ambition on the part of her parents. And "Queen Azénor de la Tour d'Armor." This legend dates from the sixth century. Azénor, daughter of the King of Léon, is married by the Bishop of Ys to a prince of a neighbouring country. That the marriage seemed suitable in one respect at least, may be inferred from the King's words in giving his consent: "He is tall and handsome they say, and handsome and tall is my daughter." She goes with her husband to his castle. Before a year has passed, the mother-in-law, the villain of the play—jealous of the beauty and influence of the young wife, accuses her falsely to her husband, who promptly ordered her to be burned. "Queen Azénor that day was led to the funeral pile, as innocent as a lamb, in white robes, her feet bare, her fair hair flowing over her shoulders. And everybody sobbing, great and small, as she passed by. And everybody saying: 'It is a crime, it is a two-fold crime to burn a woman about to give birth to a child.'" But a miracle occurs. The fire refuses to burn. "Blow, joyous firemen, blow, that the fire may burn red and strong. Let us blow our best that the fire may burn red and strong. 'Twas in vain they blew. They blew themselves breathless in vain. The fire would not kindle beneath her." Then she is ordered to be drowned and is again preserved through a miracle. Scene fifth begins thus: "What hast thou seen on the sea, O Sailor?

—A boat without oars or sail. And at the stern, for pilot, an angel. An angel standing with wings outspread.—And what hast thou seen on the Sea, O Sailor?—I saw, my lord, far out at sea, a boat, and in this boat a woman with her child, her newborn child hanging on her white breast, like a dove on the edge of a sea shell. She sang to him in a voice so sweet: ‘Sleep, sleep, my baby, sleep. Sleep, sleep, my poor little one,’ ” etc. Of course, the plot is unearthed as the mother-in-law dies, confessing her crime, and the usual serpents, so oft-recurring in Breton tales, crawl from her lying lips, and hissing, strangle her. The husband seeks Azénor over land and sea and after seven years finds her in Great Britain.

In all the instances named, the persecuted heroine is beautiful, pale, has golden hair, is good, patient, and, in every instance, forgives her enemies.

No sentiment is so strong with the Breton as their affection and veneration for the dead. With that tenacity of will and memory peculiar to the Kelt, the Breton holds to the old traditions. He treasures the legends which serve to keep alive this cult for the dead, which he inherited from the druids and which Christianity maintains. The peculiar moral atmosphere of Brittany favors this result. With these people the veil which separates the real from the marvellous is very slight. As already remarked, the true Breton is always in a state of mind where an explanation of natural



THE SARDINE FACTORY  
After the painting by Lucien Simon



events is an interpretation of the miraculous. The dead live intimately with the living.

M. Marillier writes: "In Paris it is the Cult of the Tomb; in Brittany it is the Cult of the Dead." For the Breton kneels at any tomb he encounters, without knowing even the name of him for whom he utters the prayer. M. Anatole Le Braz in his book, "La Légende de la Mort," has made this especial class of folk-lore familiar to us.

The Turkish proverb: "There are fewer things visible than invisible," applies to the Breton. Invisible to the outside world, but *he* "has the power" as they say in designating any one especially gifted in "seeing."

"Ankou" (Death) is abroad on the night of Toussaint and the creaking of his chariot wheels is heard by the Breton even though he be tucked away in his armoire bedstead, the sliding doors drawn tightly and his head well under the blankets. On that night processions of the dead are passing through fields and forests. A modest repast of Crêpe and cider—the nectar and ambrosia of Brittany—is prepared in every household before retiring, in case any hungry ghost should visit the familiar hearthstone. Lugubrious songs of the Dead are sung from door to door. Among the Breton legends mentioned, many were common to other peoples. The cricket brings good fortune. They say: "Where the cricket sings, the good God lives." A horseshoe concealed in the bed of a

rheumatic serves to lessen the pain of the occupant. In Lower Brittany when a boy is born in the household they tie a bit of red cloth around the bee-hive. On wedding days the hives are decorated with ribbons. When a death occurs they are draped in black. If the mother of the family dies, the badge remains for six months. On Good Friday a small cross of wax, blessed by the priest, is placed on the hive. *Melusina*, although in origin a French fairy, sometimes figures in Breton folk-lore. Cinderella, under another name, is often the heroine of Breton fairy tales. In the Breton version, "The Wife of the Grey Wolf," the story is more charming than in the more familiar form.

Poor dear Brittany! Her forests, her mountains and her seas are filled with Souls wandering hither and thither, weeping and groaning. They pass along the silent roadways everywhere.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### PLOERMEL, THE BATTLE OF THE THIRTY, AND JOSSELIN

AND now we are to make a little *détour*—quite worth the trouble—in order to visit Ploërmel—a matter of three or four hours' travel by rail. On the way we pass the tower of Elven, made familiar to us from the pages of Octave Feuillet's "Romance of a Poor Young Man." It is an imposing ruin of the fortress of Largouët and furnishes a good example of the medieval donjon.

As we have said—every town in Brittany has its legends. Those most popular in Ploërmel are the Legend of St. Armel and the Battle of the Thirty. Meyerbeer's Opera, "Le Pardon de Ploërmel," finds the *mise-en-scène* of its libretto in this old town and the "Shadow Dance of Dinorah" was suggested by the dance of the Breton maidens at the parish fêtes—the Pardons. It is a singular fact that Ploërmel happens to be almost the only town in Brittany at which no Pardons occur—a fact of which Meyerbeer's librettist was apparently ignorant.

The church named for the patron of the town, St. Armel (Plou, Breton for people—the people of Armel), is of the sixteenth century. The sculpture is fine, the windows, eight in number, are exceptionally beautiful and are the pride of the faithful of Ploërmel. Many of the sculptures represent scenes in the life of Christ, but certain bizarre figures suggest the jokes of Rabelais—among these are the sow playing bagpipes, a cobbler sewing up his wife's mouth and a woman seizing her husband's bonnet. Similar fantastic sculptures exist on the outer walls of the Cathedral of Chaztres. These sculptures are preserved from the more ancient church of Ploërmel and are doubtless coincident in their inspiration with the spirit which produced the "Danse Macabre" and similar examples—episodes of the Middle Ages.

Our next objective point is Josselin. Thither we travel by private conveyance. Half-way between Ploërmel and Josselin occurred an event, the record of which furnishes—to quote M. Petit de Julleville of the Sorbonne—the "most brilliant page in French History." This came to pass on March 27, 1350, during the One Hundred Years war, at a moment when the chief struggle was between England and Brittany. Bembro (Froissart's bad spelling for Pembroke), had been appointed by Edward III, Governor of Ploërmel, and Beaumanoir (Breton) was Governor of Josselin. It had been agreed to end a certain quarrel—a side issue,

by choosing thirty English and thirty Bretons, who should settle the question by arms. The place chosen for the battle was the famous oak of Mivoie, exactly half-way between Josselin and Ploërmel. Each Captain chose his thirty men. When the day arrived chiefs and champions first heard mass, then repaired to the rendezvous. All the nobility of the country came to witness the spectacle. Each party's Chief made the usual harangue, and the battle commenced. Beaumanoir is wounded. He asks for water. "Drink thy own blood," a Breton voice shouted in reply, and "*bois ton sang*" remained the war-cry of the Beaumanoirs thereafter. Even Froissart, although pensioned by the King of England, and therefore possibly biased in his judgment, admits the victory of the Bretons. The glory of this battle was, however, for a long time disputed by careful historians, but the question has now been settled by two strong testimonies—first the contemporaneous poem discovered lately at the Bibliotheque Nationale, and second the chapter of Froissart restored by its editor, M. Buchon. Thus, celebrated by poets, sung by minstrels, wrought in tapestries, the Battle of the Thirty became so famous that for one hundred years men were wont to say, in speaking of great battles: "They fought like the Battle of the Thirty."

We reach Mivoie after an hour's drive. After the verdure and beauty of Ploërmel, the place

seems barren. Everywhere grows the bunches of wild broom, just as when five and one-half centuries ago, each Breton of the Thirty gathered a spray for his helmet before going into the battle. The obelisk which marks the spot is a modest and ugly affair of granite, placed in the center of a star planted with pines and cypresses. Upon one side of the shaft are engraven the names of the Thirty Breton warriors.

At Josselin one finds much to enjoy. The château has been restored without sacrificing its character. The Duke de Rohan is its present hospitable occupant. Visitors are allowed to see the château on certain days, usually on Monday. The church of itself is worth making the journey to see. It is of the thirteenth century. There we find the splendid tomb of the great Oliver Clisson and Margaret Rohan, his wife, represented in marble, lying side by side, each pair of hands devoutly joined, the great Constable in coat of mail, at his feet a lion, at Margaret's feet a greyhound with her young. The ancient glass of the windows is rare and beautiful. This church, Notre Dame du Roncier, was famous through centuries for the miracles wrought at the Shrine of the miraculous Virgin—a black Virgin, was found under a black-berry bush in a field, and upon this spot the church was built. Since when, the town has built itself about the church. Pilgrims came from remote parts of France to intercede and invoke, and votive

offerings on the part of the cured were many and rich. I have read a book filled with astonishing statements, all duly verified. Perhaps the most curious of these is the account of a singular manifestation, the story of which has come to be a legend—The Legend of the Barking Women of Josselin. In a parish near Josselin, a long time ago, some women were washing their linen at a fountain, when a poor woman—a beggar—passed by, asking alms. Now these women were hard of heart, and not given to deeds of charity: “Go your way,” they said to her, severely, and as the stranger insisted, they sent their dogs, barking at her, to drive her away. Now this beggar was the Virgin Mary. “Heartless women,” she cried, suddenly appearing radiant as they gazed at her, “you will be severely punished for your crime. Since you do not know how to conduct yourselves as Christians, you and your children after you shall bark like these dogs that you have set upon me.”

Since when (until several years ago when M. Anatole Le Braz and M. Charles Le Goffic got a law passed interdicting the custom) on the fête-day of the Virgin there came people, barking like dogs and suffering great agony, to invoke the aid of Mary, at whose shrine they were cured of their strange malady. Sometimes men have been the victims of the malediction.

It would be a pity not to improve the opportunity of visiting the Forest of Paimpont, the Brocé-

liande of the Arthurian Tales. This may be done by driving from Ploërmel about fifteen miles, to Plelan, in itself worth a visit—a little beyond Plelan is the town of Paimpont, situated in the forest. In this forest Merlin the Enchanter, himself under the spell of the Enchantress Vivian, lies imprisoned under a rock. So the Breton bards affirm (and I never doubt what the bards tell me!) Sometimes the traveller in Brittany almost imagines himself under a spell—so subtle is the influence of the legendary atmosphere in which the Breton exists.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### LE CROISIC, BATZ AND GUÉRANDE

BUT we must now return to Ploërmel, where we take train southward for the purpose of visiting a cluster of towns on the seacoast—Le Croisic, Batz and Guérande. The last-named was the ancient Capital of Brittany, and it has preserved its feudal aspect as only two other towns of France have done, Vitré, which we have visited, and Avignon in Provence. No more beautiful picture of an ancient household, personages and customs of a Breton town can be found than that given by Balzac in his “Béatrix,” in which Guérande furnishes the *mise-en-scène*.

Guérande in its position is the summit of a triangle, at the other angle of which are Batz and Le Croisic, both places no less curious and interesting. Guérande is still surrounded by its ancient walls, its battlements are entire, its loop-holes even are perfect. The streets are as they were four hundred years ago, although now almost deserted.

Placed in this remote corner of the Continent, Guérande leads nowhere and no one goes to Guérande. It is silent, melancholy and beautiful—proud of former importance, however, for it was not only the Capital of Brittany, but the great Du Guesclins were the ancient lords of the Castle and the domain. And in our travels in Brittany one may find the seemingly identical Guénics, the old Baron, Mademoiselle Zéphirine, Calyste and Gasselín, and all the other types which Balzac, in his novel, has so admirably portrayed. To poet, artist or archæologist, Guérande is a place *after his own heart*.

It is a delightful drive from Guérande to Batz—along the shore—rocks and ocean at our left—at our right the salt marshes. We watch the men of Batz in their white costumes dipping the salt from the vats. The costumes of the women are renowned for their elaborateness, and no Breton town enters into competition with it in this regard.

The third of this triangular group of towns is Le Croisic. It might be described as a few streets flung out upon a jagged rocky point. But let us take Robert Browning's more graphic description: "Croisic, the spit of sandy rock which juts spitefully northward, bears nor tree nor shrub to tempt the ocean . . . all stub of rock and stretch of sand, the land's last strife to rescue a poor remnant for dear life." Browning has made this trio of Breton towns unforgettable. Guérande—a veritable bit

of Italian softness, balmy air, tender sky, fruitful, verdant with perfume of violet and spreading green of figtrees. Batz and its picturesque men and women and Croisic with its "Two Poets," whom he has rescued from oblivion, through his satire, not in his best style, it is true, but in better verses than either of the "Two" had dreamed of in his day. Especially has Robert Browning made Croisic unforgettable—not because he lived there, for the simple folk do not dream what poet dwelt among them those summers, but chiefly because "Hervé Riel," the "Croisickese," has been so beautifully framed in one of his finest poems. This rocky coast of Croisic is a fit training-school for such sailors as our hero of "St. Malo." We walked along the shore among the fisher-folk and met our Hervé Riel more than once. He looks to-day to be of the same valiant stuff as when he "up-stood, out-stepped, in-struck," to save the French fleet on that thirty-first of May, 1692, at St. Malo on the Rance. The type abounds on this rocky shore of Croisic: "Not a symptom of surprise,—in the frank blue Breton eyes," exactly describes the Hervé Riel we met in Croisic. Nor is the "Belle Aurore" lacking. We saw—we believe we saw—Hervé Riel and his "Belle Aurore" and flocks of little Hervé Riels and Belle Aurores on a September morning in 1896.

But for Robert Browning's poem, the hero of Croisic would not have been to-day rehabilitated.

When the English poet in his "Hervé Riel" wrote:

"Name and deed alike are lost:

Not a pillar nor a post

In his Croisic keeps alive the feat as it befell;"

he little dreamed that it was this very poem that would serve to "keep alive the feat"; and that a beautiful statue would stand as "pillar" or "post."

During two centuries the people of le Croisic had "heard tell" of a brave deed of a mariner of their coast. Like all legends, the story passed from lip to lip—from one generation to another—an old tale retold by some mariner to pass the time on nights of watching for a belated vessel. But legends are history—veiled by the myth, it is true—and to-day the legend of Croisic, the legend of Hervé Riel—is history, illustrated by the fête and to be perpetuated by the statue.

After the death of his wife, Robert Browning sought solitude. Lower Brittany, which until then had had no associations with his life, offered the conditions desired, and he spent several summers at Pornic and Saint-Marie. The summer of 1866 found him at Le Croisic. Here the poet lived during the summers of 1866 and '67, and here the poem "Hervé Riel" was written.

Little knew the folk of Croisic what manner of man was in their midst those summers "takin'

notes!" In fact the name of Robert Browning was unknown to Croisic until recently. Now, however, it has become a household word. The poem "Hervé Riel," translated into French and recited by an artist from the Théâtre Français, at the inauguration of the statue, will never be forgotten in old Croisic town. Robert Browning's poem, "Hervé Riel," furnished the inspiration which resulted in the placing and inauguration of the statue of the hero of Croisic, which stands on the shores of his native town, and which has made known to his compatriots what a brave deed was done by one of them. How can such an event be other than inspiring to those who know the story which the poem has embodied and celebrated?

One day in Paris, at the Salon of 1910, the attention of M. Port was attracted by the work of a young sculptor, René Paris. The statue bore for title: "A Pilot Among Rocks." He found that the model who had posed for the statue was a sailor of Croisic. The coincidence was suggestive, and as the model chanced to be a nephew of the Mayor of Croisic, M. Port thought the moment propitious, and seized the opportunity. He wrote to the Mayor, proposing the placing of the Statue at Croisic. Meantime the Under Secretary of State for Fine Arts offered his aid, and through his influence the Municipal Council of Paris voted the necessary expenses, and the bronze was ordered. Thus it came about that without opening

a subscription, the statue awaited its place in le Croisic. The Municipal Council of le Croisic bought the site and voted money for the Inaugural Fête. At Croisic it was a Hero to be honoured instead of a saint—though, of course, many a saint has been a hero in his day—and the ovation was profane, for no mass was said in the parish church, but priests, bourgeoisie and fisherfolk, men of letters from Paris, officers of the marine—"all sorts and conditions" gathered about the statue erected in honour of a coasting pilot of Croisic, born two hundred and fifty years ago; and thus it came to pass that le Croisic recognized her hero.

After the fourteenth century the history of Croisic was the history of Brittany. The oldest monument of Croisic is the Pierre Longue—the (so called) druidic stone. The chapel of St. Goustan comes next, dating from six hundred and fifty. It has its popular legend—that of St. Gousten—who, overtaken by a storm, landed at Croisic, and, overcome by fatigue, slept lying on a rock on the shore. The imprint of the saint is still visible on the rock—so the story must be true!

On the coast we find Pornic—"just where the sea and the Loire unite," Browning's poem, "Golden Hair," has it. This little town is at present popular as a summer resort. But the legend and its setting, as embodied in the poem, alone make Pornic interesting to-day. The ancient church, beneath the altar of which the "beautiful

girl too white" was buried, has vanished, and an ugly modern structure replaces it.

A mile from Pornic we find the bit of coast and sea and house and fig-tree of the poem: "James Lee's Wife." The Pornic legend embodied in the poem "Golden Hair" is redolent of the peculiar Breton flavor. The unsuspected sin of avarice bears its sinister fruit, springing from the golden hair coiled "aye" down to her breasts.

## CHAPTER XXX

### NANTES AND ANNE OF BRITTANY

A VERY agreeable way of reaching Nantes, which brings us into the Department of the Loire Inférieure, and is our next stopping place—is to sail up the river Loire. Nantes has a rich and varied history. For its early records we must go to Cæsar and Tacitus. Its ecclesiastical history includes a list of great names, as do its civil records. Early Kings of Brittany figure among these. Today Nantes is strongly commercial in its atmosphere, and one is forced to search out the few ancient landmarks, so hemmed in are they with handsome modern buildings.

The house from which was issued the famous Edict of Nantes in 1598, still exists and may be visited.

In the Cathedral of Nantes, the traveller pauses to admire a beautiful tomb in black and white marble—a superb work from the hand of a Breton sculptor too little known—one of the few happy artists who have left only masterpieces to mark his



ANNE OF BRITTANY

From a commemorative medal by Jehan de Paris made in 1499 when Anne, widow of Charles VIII, married Louis XII



passage through the latter half of the fifteenth century—Michel Colomb, as sculptor, will not easily be forgotten by anyone who has travelled through Brittany.

Within this beautiful tomb rest the ashes of Francis II, last of Brittany's dukes. And in a casket of gold, of rich workmanship, in the year 1514, was placed the heart of a woman—daughter of Francis II—Anne, the last Duchess of Brittany, and twice Queen of France. Among the sepulchers of St. Denis we find her tomb beside those of her two royal husbands—Charles VIII and Louis XII. But she begged that her heart might be sent to her own Bretons—a heart ever loyal to her Province.]

Anne of Brittany, deprived of her mother in her infancy, shared the confidence of her father, and generally accompanied him upon his various expeditions. The descriptions of historians and the portrait in her book of hours preserved in the Bibliotheque Nationale show her to have been a person of great charm. The record of the year following the death of her father (Anne was then fourteen) is full of romance. Although her duchy was threatened, Anne was still the richest and most powerful heiress on the continent. Any prince to whom she should bring Brittany as her dower was sure to hold the balance of power in Europe. The Prince of Orange was one of her many royal suitors, but unfortunately for his suit, he had solicited

the interference of the Pope. When Anne learned this she protested publicly, declaring that she detested him. And when she discovered the plans laid for carrying her off in spite of herself, she galloped across Brittany on horseback, followed by guardians, councillors and governess, and, reaching Nantes, asked for admission. But the Ambassador of the Prince of Orange had been there in advance, and the gates of the city were closed to her. In fact the Marshal of Nantes came outside the gates to capture her. But if they imagined they were dealing with a child, they found themselves repulsed by a heroine. "*A Moi, Dunois,*" she shouted to her only defender, the faithful Chancellor, and, springing to the saddle behind him, off they galloped to a place of safety. After passing two weeks in the fields, she still protested that she would bury herself in a cloister rather than marry this insistent Prince. And then, called by her faithful subjects at Rennes, she made her ducal entrance in that city and took the oath before Parliament as her predecessors had done.

[Finally the young King of France resolved to marry Anne himself, and she, seeing no other way out politically for Brittany, gave him her hand. Nature had refused Charles VIII nearly every advantage of mind and body. He was at that time twenty years of age, Anne was fifteen.

A bit of sentiment lingered in Anne's heart. The Duke of Orleans, of all the pretenders, had been

the one most favored by her. That visit at the Château of Nantes had left a romantic interest in the hearts of both Anne and Louis. At this moment, however, he was submissive to his cousin, and also grateful, for Charles had rescued him from the iron cage of Bourges in spite of the Regent of France. Hence Louis had come in person to adjure all hope for himself, and to beg Anne to give herself to his royal cousin.

Fifteen days later the royal troops departed from Brittany and Anne left Rennes to join the King at Langeais on the Loire.

With fifteen days in which to arrange a royal trousseau—it is interesting to note, quoting precisely from our Charlotte d'Albert, that the "Duchess Anne came to the castle attended by a great train of Breton lords and ladies, and she brought rich store of clothing and of household plenishing. Most magnificent of all her robes was her wedding gown of cloth of gold of more than ten thousand pounds in value, and its train and her mantle were bordered with an hundred and sixty skins of ermine."

The reign of Queen Anne was worthy and noble. She was submissive to her husband. She protected her beloved Bretons, opening high careers and the best positions in the court and army to her compatriots. She held her court to the most rigid rules of propriety and the most scrupulous etiquette. She had much to do to close the lips of

calumny and perhaps to silence her own heart—who knows? And the young, brilliant and passionate Louis of Orleans, when an indiscreet expression of regard for Anne escaped him, found himself banished from court by his queen. Queen Anne gave two daughters to France—Claude and Renée. All Brittany fêted these events.

Six years after the marriage Charles died and Louis became King. Anne had returned to Brittany at the death of Charles VIII. After four months our widow of twenty-one accepts the proposal of Louis XII, and again mounts the throne of France.

And now we note a change in the rôle of Anne of Brittany. No longer a merely submissive and reserved wife, she became a veritable sovereign and a consummate diplomat. She had a large share in the governing of France, as of Brittany. She was the first Queen of France to establish the ladies court and she founded an Order of Chivalry for women, based on moral worth. She had a bodyguard—mostly Bretons, who attended her wherever she went—always waiting her orders on the little terrace at Blois, which we see to-day in visiting this château on the Loire. It still bears the name Anne gave it:—"My Bretons' Perch." The King treated her with the greatest honour and respect. In private he called her "*ma petite Brette.*" Anne is perhaps the only Queen of France who has known how to hold to the last the



A GROUP OF BRETONS  
At the Pardon of Montfort L'Amaury, a little town near Paris, dedicated to  
Queen Anne of Brittany



love of her husband. He wrote long verses to her, in Latin, when he was past fifty. To be sure, they were composed by his secretary! Anne replied to them in the same language, the replies being composed by herself. Men of letters and artists found in her appreciation and patronage. Anne's taste for arts, poetry and ancient literature is a well-established fact. She knew her Greek as well as she knew her Latin. It was, in fact, she who was preparing for the Renaissance of Arts and Letters which was to immortalize her son-in-law, Francis I. Her court was a school of virtues, a triumph of politics and an Academy of Arts and Belles Lettres. It is said that even the little Renée—worthy daughter of her mother—discoursed so loftily of astronomy as to astonish the court.]

On the ninth of January, 1514, at the age of thirty-seven, Queen Anne died and her body was laid in the tomb beside the place reserved for Louis XII. The heart of their Duchess was received by the Bretons, at Nantes, with great solemnity and pomp. The Bretons, not to be outdone by France, who had lighted four thousand candles at Notre Dame, at the funeral of their Queen, lighted five thousand in the Cathedral at Nantes in honour of their Duchess.

[The adherence of Queen Anne to the customs and costumes of her Province has furnished the material for many a legend. One of these has it that she mounted the throne of France in wooden

shoes and we have spoken of the famous and popular rondo, which we always sing at the Breton banquets and fêtes, the same as sung by old Marc'harit, entitled: "The Sabots of Anne of Brittany," beginning: "*C'était Anne de Bretagne, avec ses sabots,*" and each refrain: "*Vivent les sabots de bois.*"

## CHAPTER XXXI

### CLISSON, THE GROTTO OF ABÉLARD AND THE CASTLE OF TIFFAUGES

FROM Nantes to Clisson it is only an hour by rail, and it is worth a much longer journey to visit the ruins of this fine example of a medieval castle of the first order. This was the domain of the Lords of the House of Clisson, another of whose castles we saw at Josselin, for more than a single castle was needed to satisfy a Breton lord in olden times. Situated upon a high rocky point overlooking the country about, its walls twelve feet in thickness, the towers and battlements adapted to the fierce conflicts of the middle age, this castle of Clisson recalls strongly the feudal history of Brittany.

Almost within sight, as we stand on the parapet, is the grotto, sacred to the souvenirs of the lovers, whose tomb at Père La Chaise is the shrine sought by all the world who loves a lover. On the route from Nantes to Clisson we had passed Le Palet, a little hamlet where, in 1079, the most subtle dialectic

tician of his time—Abélard—was born. When the lovers, in the early period of their troubles, sought absolute solitude, where could it be found more complete than in this wild and desolate Morbihan? Hither they fled from Paris. Here their child was born. As we sat near this grotto in the twilight of an evening in June, and recalled the story which furnishes the most romantic page in the annals of the sons of Brittany, the gloomy shadows of the forest and the singing of the nightingales in the branches overhead, seemed a fit setting for the souvenirs of the story of Abélard and Héloïse.

In a solitary spot on the shore of the Gulf of Morbihan we find the ruins of the Abbey of St. Gildas, which are well worth visiting. Here Abélard passed a few unhappy years, persecuted by the monks of that order. To-day his spectre seems to be wandering among the weird rocks and grottos of this solitary spot.

Each period of the history of Morbihan—the Roman, the Medieval and the Revolutionary, has been vigorous and dramatic in its manifestation. And the historic personages of this portion of Brittany are of a character which seems fitted to the stern and gloomy aspect of its history, as well as its topography.

Vannes—chief city and capital of Morbihan—has its two distinct divisions, the ancient and the less ancient—for no part of it is modern. The former is still surrounded with its ancient walls and is

dominated by the Cathedral. The streets are narrow and crooked.

Only one place remains for us to visit together. It offers a rather somber end of our little journeys. For we shall find this last château, which we are about to visit, presenting a strong contrast to the cheerful, hospitable garden, avenues and entrance to that first château which we travelled together to Vitré to see the Château Les Rochers—permeated with the graceful and charming atmosphere of Madame de Sévigné.

An hour of railway travel brings us from Clisson to Tiffauges—the most important of the Bluebeard castles. Of the many Bluebeard legends Brittany furnishes three. First the Legend of the Count of Comorre of the country of Tréguier, of an unenviable reputation respecting his wives, of whom he had four in suspiciously rapid succession, all four disappearing mysteriously. Second, the legend which the French poet, Leconte de Lisle, has so beautifully framed in one of his poems to be found in the collection entitled: "Poèmes Babares." Lastly, the Legend of Gilles de Rais. Among the bravest generals who fought with Charles VII and Jeanne d'Arc for his country was Gilles de Rais, Marshal of France and Lieutenant-Governor of Brittany—one of the greatest soldiers of the kingdom—allied to royal and ducal families. He was born in 1404, and became lord of many castles and parishes. At the

age of twenty-four he was versed in letters, science and religion. After having borne his sword with honour in the wars he gave himself up to the pursuit of pleasure, and became an adept in that monomania of the Middle Ages—sorcery. His establishments were regal. He supported a guard of two hundred knights, a complete company of comedians, a chapel of thirty monks, a boy choir and musicians, a horde of servants who were fed and clothed like the servants of princes, and who followed him on horseback wherever he went. He held open house and his table abounded in costliest food and wines. His chapels were enriched with ornaments, cloth of gold and silver, censers, candelabra, crosses and cups of gold, and an organ which he carried with him everywhere. His comedians played mysteries and also love pieces, called at that time *Moresques*. The habitual scenes of the revels of this Breton lord were near Nantes, also at Vannes, at the castle of Chantocé, but above all at Tiffauges. Finally, after having sold and squandered the greater part of his lands, Gilles de Rais undertook to make gold in order to satisfy his increasing passions, and threw himself into the depths of alchemy and sorcery. He sought out in Germany, Italy and elsewhere in Europe those engaged in this pursuit. In the gloomy subterranean passages of the Castle of Tiffauges, assassination mingled with the orgies. We see to-day the chapel in which the Black Mass took

place during these orgies. With his own hands he strangled young children, and crowned his *diablerie*, assisted by his chaplains and valets, with sacrilegious processions and infamous ceremonies. He studied the *refinements* of cruelty. An old woman, veiled in black, hunted in the fields and forests of the neighbourhood little shepherdesses and enticed them to the fatal castle, after which they were never seen again. The inhabitants believed they were carried off by fairies. The oubliettes of Tiffauges kept their victims and their secrets for years. But there came a time when questions were asked—terrible cries had been heard at night, and finally suspicion was aroused and complaints made. The matter was brought before the Bishop of Nantes. Investigations brought to light the skeletons of one hundred and forty children in the subterranean vaults of Tiffauges alone. The Marshal, when questioned, refused at first to reply—but the threat of torture brought from him confessions enough to hang scores of men. His declarations are unfit for thought or mention. Condemned to be burned, this monster of wickedness disappeared, and thenceforth the name of Gilles de Rais was something to frighten children with.

At one of the bridges named Belle Croix, at Nantes, at the spot where one sees the image of the Virgin, is an ancient monument placed in the wall to mark the place of the execution of Marshal

Gilles de Rais. The records of his trial are preserved in the archives of Nantes. His remains were buried in the Church of the Carmelites.

At the castle of Tiffauges, the formidable figure of this Satanic individual, who was the twofold embodiment of the most perfect artist and the most cruel monster, constantly confronts us. We do not need to call upon the imagination to aid in picturing the interior of the Castle of Tiffauges, as it was in the fifteenth century. Documents exist which are precise. The lofty arched walls of this now ruined castle were resplendent with the sumptuousness of the period—wainscoting of rich woods, tapestries brilliant in gold and silver, floors in rich mosaic, the vaulted roofs splendid in blue and gold, the escutcheons of this powerful family emblazoned everywhere—chairs of lordly proportions, richly carved divans, sculptured cabinets, prie-dieux, dressers, coffered in elaborate designs, chests wrought in metal, the beds raised upon platforms and richly set out in brocades and laces—perfumes, embroideries in luxurious profusion. And upon all this *mêlée* of colour and sumptuousness the statues of St. Anne, St. Margaret and St. Catharine looked down!

Nor are the details less precise concerning the banqueting hall of this veritable palace. From the gorgeous chimney-pieces to the rare sauces and wines, all was in the same princely fashion. And we see Gilles de Rais in the midst of his un-

godly guests—the perfect illustration of his type—the product of the age which made the type possible.

To-day we wander about among ruined arches and in the gloomy subterranean chapel we note the oubliette. Still deeper underground is the prison where scores of little girls, awaiting their turn in the horrors, were rescued by the authorities searching the castle for evidence when the day of reckoning finally arrived.

Thus we find Morbihan furnishing rather gloomy studies, and yielding the most lugubrious impressions of any of the Departments of Brittany. The Spirit of Druidism, the bold and intrepid Jeanne de Montfort, the somber picture of the Breton Bluebeard, the pathetic romance of Abélard and Héloïse—afford to the traveller gloomy souvenirs of Morbihan. And lastly the intrepid Chouans play their rôle. The stern independence of the Breton character is found complete in Chouannerie, and in the wars of the Vendée a century ago the Breton played a distinguished part. Thus the political history of Brittany begins with the Druids three thousand years ago and ends with the exploits of the Chouans in 1793.

We have found that of the five Departments of Brittany, Finistère may be named the Department of Art and Religion; the Côtes-du-Nord is filled with souvenirs of feudal Brittany and the ex-

plaits of her dukes and counts; the Loire-Inférieure of which Nantes is the capital, and Ille-et-Vilaine of which Rennes is the chief city, have become more modern in spirit, and Morbihan may be named the most strongly Keltic Department of the Province.

If in these little journeys together we have succeeded in interpreting to our readers in some degree the landscape and the people of Brittany, the genius, psychology and mysticism of the Bretons, the object of these pages will have been accomplished.

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