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By ARCHIBALD CLAVERING GUNTER

Author of MR. BARNES OF NEW YORK MR. POTTER OF TEXAS THAT FRENCHMAN, ETC.

A Sequel to MR. BARNES OF NEW YORK

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Flying into the cabin, expecting to meet you, I heard the doors close upon me and a voice in Corsican French said: "She is ours!" Then the slipping of bolts outside told me I was a prisoner. No cries of mine or commands were heeded. The yacht got under way. Ah, what a night I've passed here in this cabin that should have been our honeymoon home, thinking of your misery when you found you had lost me. But knowing by your love that you will pursue and find me, I send you this warning, which is of great importance. I have learned by some careless French conversation that has drifted in to me that I am to be made the lure to bring you to the death of the vendetta in Bocognano. To me Sallivetti has boasted that they have notified you they take me to Corsica. They are sure your affection for me will make you follow me, rash and careless in your agony. There Sallivetti means to assassinate you, thinking by that to gain the votes of his peculiar countrymen because he has nobly fulfilled his diabolical oath of the horrible vendetta that they worship. Therefore, my dear friend, I send you this. I charge you not to risk your dear life unduly, and to bring with you enough friends to protect you from these assassins. I hear the splash of the boat put overboard; they will be coming for me, so kiss the letter where I sign and you'll meet the lips of, in life or death, always, YOUR WIFE.

Barnes reads this letter carefully twice. Once he gazes up; but the sight of the cabin decorated for his honeymoon, about which are scattered his wife's dainty belongings brought on board for a nuptial voyage, makes him close his misty eyes with a studder.

Leboeuf is now calling down the companionway: "Monsieur, I have obeyed your wife's commands. A good meal is served on deck for you and Madame Anstruther."

He must eat to keep his strength up for the work that is ahead of him. The American steps alertly on deck and tries to show his appreciation of the French chef's art, but anguish is a bar to appetite.

After a moment Barnes passes Enid's letter over to Edwin's wife. When she has read it, he says: "I have been thinking if it wouldn't be better to sail to Ajaccio and get De Belloc and some of his troopers to go with us to Bocognano."

"With De Belloc and his troopers you would never find her," answers Marina. "The sight of their cavalry uniforms would be signalled up the Valley of the Gravona; Enid would not be in Bocognano. In the mountain fastnesses of Del Oro they would hide her where you would never find her."

"Then some honest countrymen, from this neighborhood; they can be hired?" suggests Barnes.

"But not by a foreigner to strike against a Corsican," replies Marina, almost proudly. "To have any hope of finding your wife we must go alone. I'll lead you by secret paths through the mountains; on the main road did they see you coming they would ambush and kill you." Her eyes look eagerly upon the shore, she rises and says, resolutely: "Come!"

Barnes, more eager than she, quickly dresses himself in the simple hunting suit he has brought with him.

"Oh, you must look more Corsican," cries the girl, and deftly puts a cock's feather plucked from one of his bride's bonnets in his hat. "Some soot, Felix," she commands the cook, "to make Monsieur's eyebrows darker and his moustache black."

"Yes, that's it!" she adds eagerly.

"And you?" asks Barnes placing his eyes on Marina's white Parisian fete dress.

"Oh, I've brought a Corsican peasant's costume with me," and the lady calls to Graham to bring on board a little bundle she had left upon the deck of the fishing smack.

Then Marina runs down the companionway and secludes herself in the salon while Barnes gives his directions to Graham. "You had better return that fishing boat to Villefranche by two of your crew."

"Yes, even a land lubber can sail her across in this fine weather without any trouble," answers the mate.

"I am sorry, my gallant fellow, I cannot take you with me," says the American; "only Marina and I must go."

"Hoot, man! not lone wi' that delicate lassie."

"We are safer alone than with a few," replies Barnes. "But have the yacht ready to sail and a sharp lookout kept for me. During the night have a boat ashore there with a couple of men in it, so that, if necessary, I may immediately come on board of you."

"Aye, aye! Night and day I'll look for you," answers the mate.

"Now, bring the boat alongside."

"Not yet, Monsieur," cries Leboeuf, issuing from the galley, "not without something to eat, to support you and Madame," and he produces a big haversack filled with provisions.

"You're right. By evening we shall be hungry, if not before," answers the American, and he will be dead of hunger as much as possible native inns." He calls: "Madame Anstruther, I am ready!"

"And so am I." And Marina trips to the deck, a peasant girl of her island—her dark brown tresses shaded by the graceful mandile and a faldetta of grey cloth draping her agile figure. Her short skirts disclose her delicate feet shod in strong country shoes fit for use over the stones of mountain paths.

Both are eager, within five minutes they are in the boat, and pulled by two Scotch tars, soon land upon the rocky shore. As Marina's feet touch the soil, she looks at it passionately and murmurs bitterly: "To think that I come back to my native island with the hands of so many of the friends of my childhood against me, with so many hearts that once turned toward me turned away." Then she draws herself up and says desperately, yet proudly: "But I will show to them my hands are free of the blood of Tommaso Monaldi."

Clambering over the sea-washed rocks, they reach the green woodland, and soon through its soft foliage of flex, beech and wild citron, tread a romantic path that leads them to the more dusty highway which skirts the coast, slightly to the south of the little quay of Sagone. This Marina says is fortunate, that they need not excite curiosity by passing through the seaside village to reach the road to Vico, by which they will strike east to reach the vast glen between Monte Rotondo and Monte Del Oro.

A little while along this road, roasting beneath the hot sun and stifled by the dust of early summer, when Marina says, pointing to a farmer's house: "Stay here and I'll bargain for the use of two of the native ponies I see in his barnyard."

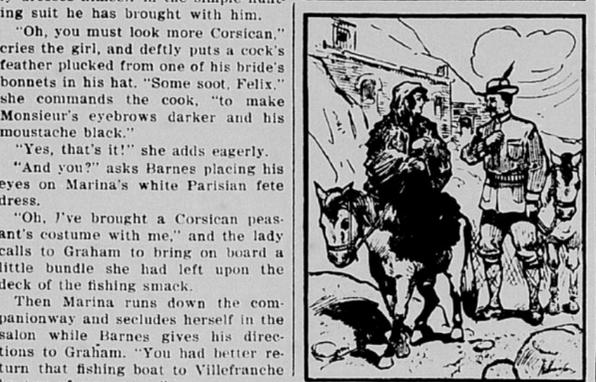
A few minutes of apparently excited gesticulation and talk with the peasant who is hoeing in his field, and she brings into the road two sturdy, shaggy brown ponies.

Mounting astride one of these, Corsican fashion, Marina says almost gaily: "We have the beasts for a week at 30 francs apiece. Now I feel at home again."

Upon the other Barnes would dash forward, but some very serious words from his companion stop him. "It was lucky I saw that farmer. He said: 'I would give you a more gentle beast, girl, had not four men three hours ago engaged my gentle Mandalina for a lady's use. Of course, my best was at Signore Sallivetti's order. I had heard him speak up in the mountains at the polling booth great words on the glory of Corsica, which had given France a Bonaparte and one day would give her another.'"

Suddenly the girl calls: "But you cannot overtake Enid in a second," for the American's heels are beating a tattoo on the sides of his sturdy little cob, and he is hurrying forward muttering: "Three hours ahead of me. Perhaps we can overtake my darling before night!"

"Don't ride so fast," exclaims his companion, galloping her pony to him. Then her voice growing very solemn, she says warningly: "From some hill-top, should we get too near, they will



"We Have the Beasts for a Week at Thirty Francs Apiece."

see us coming, and in a vendetta ambush, some knife might reach not only your heart but—Enid's. When you have enemies in Corsica, beware the path ahead of you!"

CHAPTER XII.
The Mountain Chalet.

Forced to a more moderate pace, the two journey up the winding road between some cornfields made red by poppies. Soon after they pass into the wooded hill lands, their path bordered by myrtles and arbutus.

After a little, the way grows wilder, the hills much steeper, and climbing the lofty Colle di San Antonio they can look down upon hill vistas, beautifully wooded, that descend to the distant sea. In the sunlight gleam of the far-off water, Barnes, using his field glasses, sees the yacht lying alone at anchor. "Graham has sent back the fishing smack," he says.

"Then thank the Virgin," cries Marina, "another letter is going to my husband telling him his disobedient wife is trying to save his sister."

They descend sharply into the little valley of the Liamone, and enter the village of Vico, whose inn is now welcoming the first summer visitors from Ajaccio.

Here Marina says: "I would be wrong if I sent not a telegram to my anxious spouse." So they dismount at the little telegraph office peculiar to

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TONE BROS.,
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Corsican villages. As they step in, a countryman slouches out and mounting a horse rides off up the main street. Her message dispatched, Marina coming from the office, says: "How hurriedly that fellow went away."

"You think he was looking for us?" asks Barnes, as he places her on her pony.

"Perhaps; Bernardo is astute. He may guess that his message to you brought you after him by water and that you would find the yacht."

"Then after him!" says Burton, and turning more to the east they follow a rapid stream, passing the Sulphur Baths of Guagno, where they can see the diligence depositing patients at its hospital for rheumatics.

They have not overtaken the man, but no one has passed them on the road, their pace has been so rapid. The peasants they have seen, so many of them carrying guns that Barnes thinks he is in the Rocky Mountains, have received the usual greetings in the patois of the country from Marina, her escort wisely keeping his sombrero pulled down over his eyes and saying nothing. But now a farmer, pausing, says: "Girl, you and your man had better not go beyond Guagno. Last night the two accursed bandits, Rochini and his mate, killed Nicolo, the sheep grower, up at his house by the lake, and carried off his daughter."

"Thank you for your advice," answers Marina politely. She glances at Barnes, but he scarcely heeds. He is urging his pony toward the mountain pass through which Enid must now be journeying.

"Who is this Rochini?" asks Barnes, to take Mrs. Anstruther's thoughts to happier things.

"He and his fellows are the only bandits of which Corsica is not proud," answers the girl, savagely. "This wretch with his underlings murders men for money. Other bandits only kill for hate or to escape capture by the gendarmes. Also this Rochini drags shrieking women to his lair, while other bandits doff their hats to ladies."

Then as they ride along the Corsican girl gives Mr. Barnes some curious information about bandits.

"This murderous Rochini is not of our commune; he has been driven from Rotondo by the farmers because of his outrages and came over to Del Oro," she remarks, excitedly. "Our own Bocognano bandits, the brave Bellacoscia," Marina's tone is proud, "whose family name is Bonelli, only fled to the mountains to escape pursuit from our cruel gendarmes, because, forsooth, the elder Antonio killed Marc' Angeli, who dared to marry the girl upon whom he had set his heart. The younger, Giacomo, because he would not endure the French conscription, so he slew the brigadier and his men who came to arrest him. Still Antonio Bonelli, when the Teutons overran France, offered to go over and fight the German Von Moltke with his 500 Bellacoscia—brothers, sons, grandsons and nephews—if they would give him safe conduct from arrest. At first Monsieur Gambetta accepted, then he refused, fearing there might be a new Bonaparte among these Corsicans to again save France and rule the country."

"Oh, we are devoted to the Bellacoscia," she continues fervently. "Every boy by the wayside gives them warning of the gendarmes; every child picking flowers in the mountains tells them of the coming of the brigadiers who would capture or slay them. Though many men and women, some of gentle blood, are placed in prison for aiding them, the authorities never receive information from their lips. But these wretches, Rochini and Romano, are abhorred by all, and blessings would be showered on any who might bring their bodies into Bocognano."

All this has been said as they hurried through the dust and sun for three more miles. They enter the village of Guagno. There is no way of avoiding the hamlet; it stands almost at the entrance of the deep gorge between the two great mountains—besides, the ponies need rest.

"It would be better if we were not seen here," suggests Marina, "though the inn looks comfortable."

"And you must both rest and eat," remarks Barnes, who has noticed that his fragile companion, unaccustomed to the severe exercise of horseback travel in the hot sun and stifling dust, is somewhat fatigued.

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They ride up to the auberge, dismount and give their ponies to the care of a Corsican boy, who leads them away.

Entering, they are met by the loquacious landlord, who tells them, as they demand a hurried meal, that business is not very brisk, the season being too early for many invalids at the baths, besides all travellers are kept from the mountains beyond by fear of Rochini and Romano.

"May the curse of God rest on them—they spoil my business even down here," says the hotel man savagely as he goes to bring the food.

"I do not think you had better go with me farther," remarks Barnes seriously.

"What, stand back because a murderer threatens the way to Enid?" cries Marina. "Besides, you can shoot your pistol."

"Then may God curse me if I let harm come to you for your devotion to my wife," returns the American with grateful eyes.

"Then I'm safe," says the Corsican girl simply, who has supreme faith in the deadly marksmanship of her escort.

From the little garden outside, the conversation of two rustics drifts in to them. One is apparently a local wool buyer, the other a shepherd from the neighboring mountain, who is bargaining with him for his shearing.

A moment later their host places the dinner in front of them. "Here are trout from our Liamone, a fitch of moufflon killed on Rotondo and some chianti made from the vines outside. Real moufflon, real chianti, besides chestnuts from my own grove!" he remarks proudly, as he arranges their knives and forks.

"You have also a few visitors, I presume, to eat them?" queries Marina, sympathetically.

"Oh, none to-day; there are not enough invalids at the baths; the season is too early. Besides, young Sallivetti didn't stop here with his party, but hurried on three hours ago. Does that young statesman expect to get the vote of Vincenzo, the landlord? Not even a drink of wine did he buy. But the reprobate has an eye for beauty if not for political influence. A yellow-haired girl was with him, though his followers kept so close about her I could not see her face. But I give you additional warning. Tonight you must stay in my inn. Toward the mountains there is another bandit, an extra one."

(Continued on page 10)

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