

CARCASSONNE.

By MAY CROMMELIN.

WHERE is Carcassonne? And what is it when you get there—a town, village, castle, sea-port? So English readers may exclaim. But if any of you have a French friend acquainted with the southern geography and traditions of his *pays du midi*, ask this question, and see if a smile does not beam broadly on your ignorance.

Carcassonne! Why, it is a household proverb in France as an unique sight. Who has seen it may rise superior to envy when travellers prate of Nuremberg, and Rome, or Granada.

"So madame is going to Carcassonne! Ah, she has *joliment raison!*" exclaimed my hotel-keeper at Pau on hearing my destination, and he grinned. Two bystanders laughed gaily. It was irritating to feel out of the joke, but light or serious enquiries as to *why* my goal seemed risible only produced shrugs of the shoulders. "I don't know." "Nor I; but it is the custom to make merry about Carcassonne," all three could only tell me.

"There is a well-known story about it, however," cried one. "It is of an old peasant who lived in the country *not many miles* from there, and every year he said he was going to see Carcassonne, like other folk; till in the end, being eighty, he died; and his last words were of regret that he had never got to Carcassonne after all."

It is made into a funny song they sing in the *cafés chantants*—"Et je n'ai pas vu Carcassonne!" Thereupon the others chimed in, echoing the refrain, that had a despairing lilt which was really very comic.

Well, as to *what* it is after all this. It is a city, if you please—the old, old city of Carcassonne, containing at present about twelve hundred inhabitants, living behind its moat and massive ramparts and watch-towers, little less shut in from the outer world than in their ancestors' feudal days. Earlier still, during the Saracen sway, it could not have been very different, or in still more hoary background of time, under the Visigoths' stern rule. Think of it!

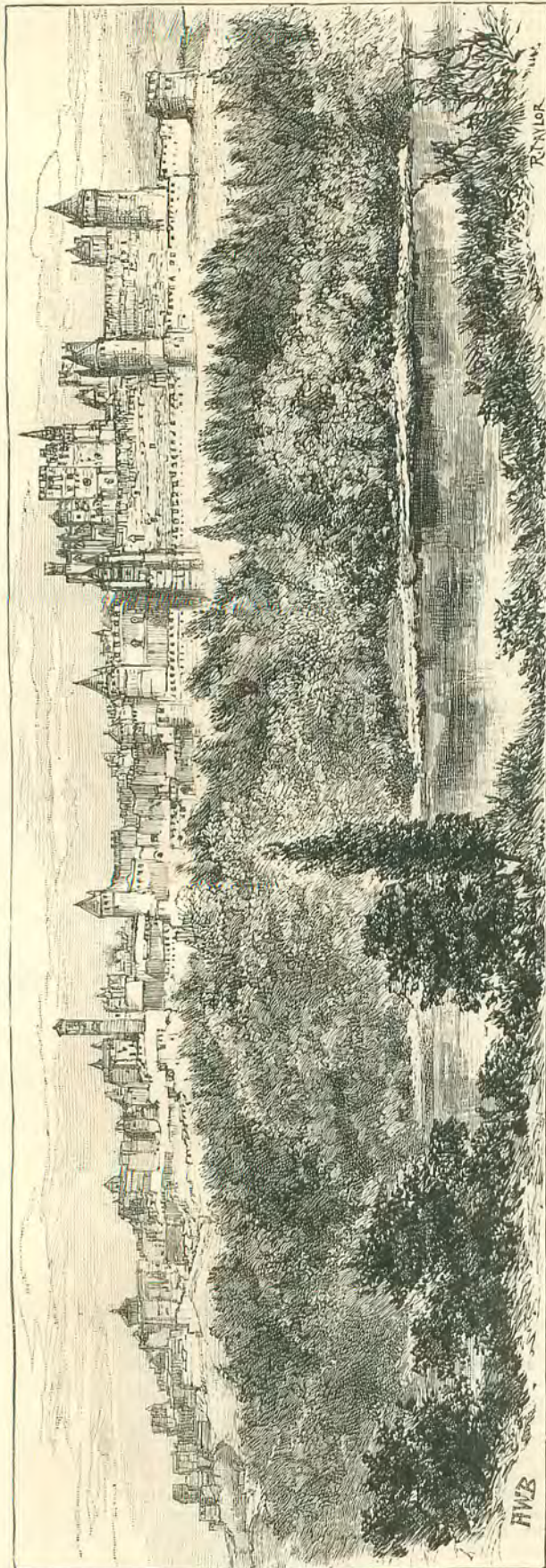
Having to journey from Pau, with its glorious view of the snow-clad Pyrenees, to Aix-les-Bains, nestled among its mountains by the blue-green Lake Bourget, I decided to stop at Carcassonne. An hotel acquaintance had impressively told me there were wonderful old-world fortifications there. Baedeker added that Simon de Montfort lay buried by the altar of its church. Beyond this knowledge I had few ideas or none concerning Carcassonne, but it was enough. So, leaving Pau about noon, a pleasant journey through a wooded country all green and fresh in the opening May-time, brought me towards six o'clock to my destination. A good station, a fairly large town, and some awaiting omnibuses did not look old-world. In one of these vehicles I was rattled for three minutes over the bridge of the Aude River, which gives its name to the Department, past a shady place planted with plane-trees, to my hotel of St. Jean Baptiste.

Its name had a flavour of antiquity, borne out by polished red-tiled floors, a shallow, wide staircase, and massive balusters. Even the large and empty *salon* upstairs had its expanse of floor all square-tiled, while stiff Empire furniture was ranged round the walls. Dinner was so well-cooked it made up for the loneliness of seeing no other guests except a departing group of stout Frenchmen, probably bachelor townfolk, who seemed to turn in for *table d'hôte* as a matter of custom, and the fare plainly agreed with them. The host was most obliging; also enthusiastic, even reverent, in praise of the *cité*, which he quite understood I had come specially to see. Many people did the same, mostly Americans passing from Marseilles to Pau or Bordeaux. The only wonder in *his* mind was, that sightseers did not flock in thousands. Why, he held "the city" was incomparable! There were now two other guests in the house, and they were getting up at half-past five to visit the old city before their train started. What a pity I could not share their carriage; it would be more sociable to go in company. However, finding it was really only a twenty minutes' walk, I cheerfully resolved to go alone. So, on a grey windy morning I started forth, with the landlady's directions following me down the pavement—"You will get to the old bridge, and then the ramparts will be facing you. That is the most striking view."

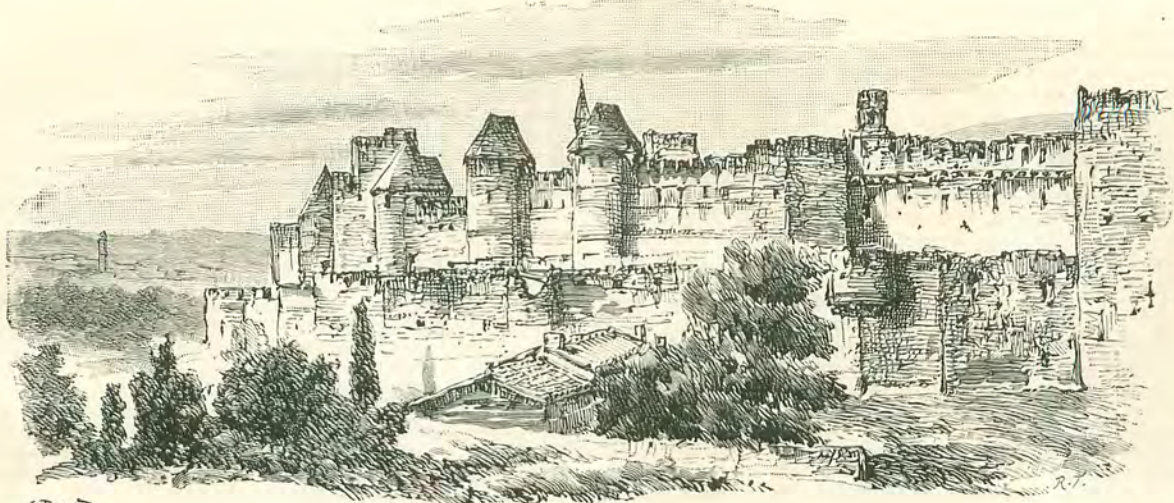
It was one, indeed! Battling with dust-swirls down wide streets, and under a long double avenue of planes, I was momentarily confused among narrow rough-paved alleys, owning ancient fountains and a statue or two. Then came a fine old bridge over the brown river—one made with angular manholes on either side, in which foot-passengers could take refuge when a procession or troop of men-at-arms was passing by.

Raising my eyes to the hill-slope on the right, I fairly started. The ramparts were indeed looking down on me. The sight was enough to make one rub one's eyes and feel transported back to the year of our Lord 1200—nay, earlier. It was a living dream.

There rose a ring of grey, embattled walls, studded with watch-towers, each crowned with pointed tops, excepting one square high one. That is the Saracens' Tower. Carcassonne was truly a strong city in days of yore.



GENERAL VIEW OF CARCASSONNE.



H.W.B.

"A RING OF GREY EMBATTLED WALLS."

There are but two city gates and some postern doors. The eastern gate, the *Porte Narbonnaise*, is the principal entrance, and the only one accessible for vehicles. To reach it, some rather squalid and tortuous streets in a low-lying quarter between hill and river must needs be passed. Even in olden days these probably existed as fisher-huts and poor-folks' cabins unworthy the shelter of the kingly burgh above. Above these, on the hill, the little city stands alone, clear of faubourg. A round-paved road winds upwards, no whit changed from days when mail-clad knights and horses clanked over its stones. On one side the deep grass-grown city moat; on the other, a bare open country, where low hill speaks to hill. How easily they must have signalled formerly to each other, "Watch!—the foe is coming."

The drawbridge of old is now solid masonry. But the *Porte Narbonnaise* looks down grimly and grandly as ever on the strangers who pass under its sculptured weather-worn front. The gateway stands open between its two great towers, and had strong defences besides its moat and barbican. The entry used to be, firstly, guarded by a chain, of which the massive rivets are still fixed in their place, and that was intended to stop cavalry from riding into the town at full speed, and so surprising the inhabitants. A *machicoulis*, or stone aperture overhead, protects the first portcullis, as also the massive wooden gate with its heavy bars. What a terrible shower of molten lead and boiling oil could be poured from above upon any daring assailants! But should they nevertheless batter down the doors with axes, crowbars, and rams, and rush under the vaulted entrance of the gate-tower, they would gain small breathing-space. A second doorway and portcullis, similarly guarded, are the only means of egress from the tower into the town. And overhead is a third deadly square hole, through which guarded opening the defenders in the room overhead would thrust down stink-pots and burning faggots. Stifling, choking, the attacking soldiers would be pent in such a death-trap, the chances were small that they would have strength to break through the second gate. Besides, lateral loopholes in the side-walls permitted crossbowmen posted in the adjacent towers to discharge a double fire of bolts on what enemies should survive.

Was this stronghold impregnable enough, do we imagine, in those days when the smell of gunpowder and the roar of cannon were unknown? By no means. There were several other means of defence, of which the principal

was a wooden outer pent-house, or gallery, above the gate-arch. On either side of the niche where stands the statue of the Virgin may still be seen the square putlog-holes, meant to receive the beams that supported this *hourd*, as it was called; whence our modern term *hoarding*. From this a terrible shower of arrows and other projectiles could be hurled on the invaders, to beat them back before ever they crossed the bridge.

Let us now pause before entering, and glean a few salient facts concerning the history of this ancient stronghold.

We shall hear what says Viollet le Duc, the great architect under whose guidance all the breaches of Carcassonne have been restored.

Towards the year 636 the senate of Rome resolved to establish a colony at Narbonne, to guard the passes into Spain. And the people of the land, being unresisting, were rewarded with rights of self-government in five towns. Foremost of these was this same Carcassonne, which in the year 70 before the Christian era was chosen as a noble, or elect, city. A deep peace brooded over Southern Gaul under the Roman rule for near five centuries with hardly a break. Then the Goths burst upon the fair southern land with fire and sword, carrying desolation over the mountains into Spain; and in 436 Theodoric the Visigoth seized Carcassonne, and left there still-abiding signs of his strong hand. Walk round her walls now; mark her bulwarks. The bases of these massive towers rest truly on Roman foundations, but were themselves reared by the fair-haired invaders. They are recognisable by being square, or rudely rounded, to receive the defences of the fifth century. Every five and twenty yards rose such a tower, all girded together by high broad walls, guarded atop by soldiery behind battlements. These towers were entirely solid below, to resist sapping and battering-rams. But at a safe height chambers were hollowed in their thickness, and thence archers shot down from wide apertures protected by wooden shutters working on horizontal bars. Imagine sublimbs made of wood and iron, and that could be pushed outwards or drawn to as need dictated, and one can picture the deadly shower of feathered missiles which issued thence.

Many a siege Carcassonne was forced, from its position, to endure. Being situated on high ground above the river Aude, it commanded the valley of the latter, which was the natural road leading from Narbonne to Toulouse. Both Franks and Burgundians tried to dislodge the Visigoth intruders, but in vain, even

when King Clovis summoned them to surrender.

But a great change was at hand. In the year 713 let us banish the stern Visigoths from our pictured Carcassonne of long ago. The Spanish Moors have won it and hold it fast. Turbaned heads garrison its walls, the Crescent gleams where the Cross was once set on high. For nigh four centuries history is almost silent on the doings within the famous stronghold. Then once more the rule changes, and these masters in turn depart like ghosts across the scene, while, as we survey the little city set on a hill, a new procession crosses the bridge down yonder across the brown stream.

It is A.D. 1096. And that central figure in the proud pageant is Pope Urban, journeying to Carcassonne to restore amity between the burghers and their lord, Bernard Atov. Some had revolted against their suzerain's authority; wherefore to certain faithful citizens he gave watch and ward over the ramparts during four months and eight months respectively—with privileges thereto pertaining which exist unto this very day. So the Pope came and restored peace, blessing the cathedral church of Saint Nazaire, that is still a joy for ever in its beauty.

Again a slide of the magic lantern shows a burning August sky and an army under the great Simon di Montfort himself. Alack for the garrison, the wells fail, and in a fortnight thirst forces the besieged to surrender, upon which their viscount is flung traitorously into one of the dungeon towers, and there dies a captive!

His successors were despoiled and banished by Louis VIII. But in 1240 one gallant young viscount raised Spanish troops, and came knocking, with battering-rams and all engines of war then in use, at the gates of his own city. In vain. After a hard-fought siege of a month the king's forces relieved the garrison, and thenceforth Carcassonne belonged to the Crown.

To hold this jewel safer in future, as some suburbs adjoining the city had sided with their hereditary lord, Saint Louis banished their inhabitants and demolished their houses, leaving the walled city standing alone as at this day. Only after seven years' lapse he allowed these exiles to return and settle across the river, where newer Carcassonne now spreads wide over the plain. Thenceforth our little city was considered impregnable, being the most strongly-fortified place in Europe during the sixth, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries. In truth, it was never more attacked, and only opened its gates to the Black Prince in

1355, when all Languedoc had submitted to that conqueror.

Architects, archaeologists, and military engineers are never weary of expatiating on the many defensive resources of Carcassonne, so planned that foot by foot the ground must needs be contested against fearful odds. But we may glean a general idea of the mode of defence by the following details. That, firstly, there was a double ring of ramparts, which, to guard against inner revolt, were cut off from the town. Secondly, even were the walls gained, each tower became a separate stronghold, commanded by its own captain, whose orders were called through speaking tubes of masonry. Thus almost as stern a front was turned inwards as outwards of this massive circle bristling with towers and pierced with deadly loopholes. It is calculated that 1322 soldiers were employed for its defence, with at least double that number of workmen and meaner varlets employed to repair damages and supply the various engines of destruction with missiles; great stones here to be hurled down in crushing force, there burning faggots and boiling streams of lead.

It will be more cheerful to turn our minds from the bloody hand-to-hand fights that took place on the very ground where we stand, and visit the town this chilly May morning. A very narrow street leads uphill from the great Narbonne gate, its houses evidently owning now but poor inhabitants. On the summit of the slope a space is cleared around the chateau. This castle is a keep within a larger stronghold—the kernel of the nut. It also possesses a moat and bridge, massive walls, and the city watch-tower.* Climbing up thither presently with the *gardien* we can see round all the enviring country afar, and somehow Biblical memories arise of the watchman who stood and saw Jehu driving furiously. Why thoughts of Palestine should often occur to me at Carcassonne I can hardly say; perhaps that the description of “the city set on a hill which cannot be hid,”

* See photo, Nord-Est. This picture shows general view of the whole city ring.

returns again and again to one's mind. The castle is no ruin. Its barrack-yard is full of soldiers, for though centuries pass and uniforms change, its strong chambers still house its defenders in baggy blue and red garments, if not in breastplate and jerkin. Only the banquet-hall and rooms of the former governors were destroyed during the Revolution.

But the ramparts are the chief end of our walk. Threading two narrow alleys, the *gardien* of these is found in a cheerful little house. He brings a great bunch of keys, and going close by to the most picturesque second gateway, the Porte de l'Aude, unlocks a postern door, and we climb up stone stairs to the tower above, and windy, broad ramparts overlooking the river valley. It is a wonderful sight. All has been here so splendidly repaired that not a stone is missing of walls and battlements. Down this oblong aperture you can descry the sharply angular steep ascent to the gateway. It is the machicolation down which they rolled stone balls, that clattered among the enemy's legs. Some are still kept as curiosities.

Now on, for we have far to go, over the wide walls like terraces, and up stone stairways to the various towers. All of these, fifty-four in entire number, need not be described. But the prison is not easily forgotten, with its torture-chamber and fire-place for heating iron instruments, and private door through which the inquisitor entered. On the walls one can faintly trace a rudely scratched drawing representing a tortured wretch. There is a worse vault beneath. Peering into its depths—unless you have courage to follow the guide down a ladder—you distinguish a central pillar, to which leg-chains are still attached. “This dungeon was full of bones, and the tibia of a man was in this very ring when the tower was opened,” declares the *gardien* with pride; and proceeds to show how lost to all succour any captive must be with such thickness of masonry between his languishing existence and outside friends.

The Bishop's Tower contains really pleasant rooms; it is now a small museum for curious

carvings and gargoyles found during the restoration.

We must hurry, however, to the gem of Carcassonne—the exquisite old church of Saint Nazaire, though space forbids dwelling on its beauties. Still, its glorious rose-windows may flame before our eyes in such a glow of colour and wealth of tracery as seldom gladdens the sight. Simon de Montfort's slab is considered by Viollet le Duc as either erroneously supposed to cover his remains, or as merely placed there to his memory. But the tomb of Archbishop Radulph is a remarkable monument, with its sculptured canons.

Alas, time passes! I would gladly linger to examine the old stone walls; cross the open grassy space behind the church to the postern door, where so many fights took place, no doubt; but some hurried glances are only possible. The porte de l'Aude is near—too near. So having entered the city by its great gate of Narbonne, it will be pleasant to leave by the rival river-gate which descends so sharply to the bridge.

The picture herewith gives only a slight idea of the picturesqueness of the gateway, the approach being so narrow and steep that it is probably difficult to photograph; but one can see the painful round paving-stones of the broad footpath up which so many weary feet have toiled in bygone days. Romans, and sons of the soil, fierce Visigoths and Franks, Saracens, Crusaders, and the troops of the Black Prince of England.

So musing, as I go down by abrupt turns, cunningly planned to disconcert an enemy, I seem in absolute solitude.

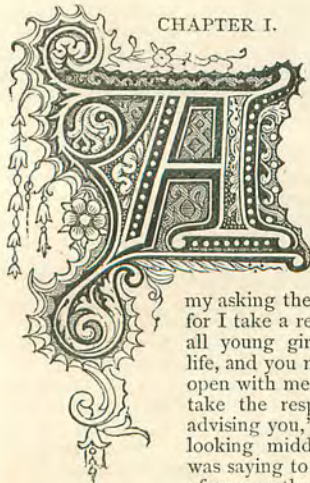
Then a clattering sound on the stones, as some soldiers come swinging behind with empty bags, suggesting a need of provisions. Two rosy little girls follow them, racing hand in hand, laughing and breathless, for it is almost impossible to stop. So other children, different soldiers, must have swung along and raced many and many a thousand times through past ages.

One last look at the grey city ringed with its towers and battlements. Good-bye, Carcassonne!

A GIRL-EMIGRANT.

A CANADIAN STORY.

CHAPTER I.



AND you have quite made up your mind that you wish to emigrate. Do your friends approve? You must not mind

my asking these questions, for I take a real interest in all young girls beginning life, and you must be quite open with me before I can take the responsibility of advising you,” a pleasant-looking middle-aged lady was saying to a young girl of apparently some twenty

years of age, who had evidently come to seek counsel of her about her future plans. The face of the elder one was one to inspire confidence, and Eleanor Hudson felt that she could not do better than tell her whole story to such an interested listener.

“I should like to tell you everything,” she replied, “if I may. My father was a clergyman; both he and my mother are dead, and I have for the last two years been teaching in a school, receiving a salary of £25 a year; I have saved a whole year's pay, and I have, I think, a suitable outfit, which I have made in my spare time, so I can pay for my passage.”

“But judging from the look of your hands I should say you have never done any household work, and it is just that which will be expected of you in the colonies. You see I am bound to tell you the truth.”

“I know. But my mother taught me plain cooking thoroughly, and I can sew well; surely that would do to begin with?”

“Oh yes, it would undoubtedly; but you know that useful young people like yourself are very much needed here in England. Why not save the expense of the journey and remain here? I could certainly find you employment of that kind among my own friends.”

Eleanor looked down for a moment, and

* This story is absolutely true in all important details, and has been written with a view to assist young emigrants of the right sort by supplying all the details of the voyage and journey and other hints, of which the writer herself felt the want when she emigrated to Canada.

her eyes filled with tears. Mrs. Maynard, her questioner, saw that there was some trouble behind. She crossed over to the girl's side, and drew her down on the sofa where she herself had been sitting, and taking her hand, said gently, “Try and tell me all, dear. It will be quite safe with me. I think you have some special reason for leaving England, perhaps?”

“Yes, I have indeed. But you will be shocked if I tell you.”

“Try me?”

“My mother's brother, my uncle, did something very dishonest last year. He had a situation in a bank. He has been found out, and— Oh! it is such a terrible disgrace, for everybody in our neighbourhood knew us and respected us before. I cannot tell you, it is too terrible.”

“Perhaps I can guess. It seems to be a good reason for beginning your life afresh in another country, certainly. Have you no relatives who are entitled to give advice?”

“None. I am absolutely alone now.”

“And when do you wish to go?”

“Next week. My term is up at the school in three days' time. Miss Hume, the head mistress, says I may remain a few days longer, though.”