

## THE ISLAND OF SARDINIA.

A Paradise for Sportsmen and Anglers—Curious Monuments that are Believed to Antedate the Pyramids—Garibaldi's Home in Exile.

Special Correspondence.

Capri, Sardinia, April 3, 1901.—It is an unaccountable fact that while scientists and antiquarians have for centuries been searching far and digging deep for curious things, they have passed all over Sardinia are thousands of nuraghi, or aboriginal sepulchres, which are unquestionably among the oldest structures in the world—the work of races which vanished from the earth so long ago that even their names are forgotten. That this insignificant island in the Mediterranean should possess a class of monuments peculiar to itself, is an illustration of the fragmentary nature of society in the ancient world. The ruins of the near-by Balearic Islands, Malta, Sicily, Italy, the Celtic remains at Stonehenge and Avebury, and other relics of early European and other races, all differing from each other, but bearing some points of resemblance—bearing some of them in the least like the nuraghi of Sardinia. They crown the summits of natural hills and artificial mounds, hundreds upon hundreds of them, and to describe one is to describe them all, except in size, they vary in size from twenty to one hundred feet in height, with precisely the same measurement in diameter. It is composed of rough masses of the large stones peculiar to the locality, placed in regular horizontal layers, the largest boulders at the bottom, and gradually diminishing in size as they mount upward. The stones bear no marks of the chisel, but they appear to have been rudely wrought by some heavy blunt instrument, perhaps another stone, which served the ancients for a hammer. The inside is always occupied by circular chambers, one above another, according to the number of stories, constructed of projecting stones, forming a dome, with the section of an arch. The chambers occupy only one-third of the interior space, the rest being taken up by double walls, between which a ramp staircase ascends to the top of the tower. Each nuraghi was originally surrounded by a high wall, of which now only fragments remain. Generally it stands alone, but occasionally they are found in groups, in which case they are attached together by a doorway in the central tower. They are absolutely without any architectural ornament, or image, sculpture, inscription, to indicate their origin and purpose. Unlike the pyramids, whose mysteries are partially unveiled, the nuraghi furnish not a single hint by which their age or history may be discovered. It is certain, however, that they are of great antiquity, because in several places the ruins of Roman aqueducts and bridges themselves now in ruins, rest upon the stumps of desecrated nuraghi, and the earliest classical writers allude to them as unguessable mysteries even in their day. Some of the stones in the lower courses weigh many tons each, yet are arranged with perfect accuracy. Sardinians believe them to have been the work of giants, who are said to have once inhabited the island, but more probably the monuments are the results of unpaid labor, exacted by despotic chiefs, or instigated by religious devotion. At any rate, their rude but massive cones have survived the shocks of time and vicissitudes of empire which have destroyed the magnificent edifices of Babylon and Nineveh, Tyre and Thebes.

There are a good many of these nuraghi in the neighborhood of Sassari, and we prolonged our visit another day in order to explore the most perfect specimen, which stands, a mute and solitary sentinel, on its mound about four miles from the city. The method of transit was a Sardinian carriage—a ponderous sort of Black Maria, drawn by three mules harnessed abreast and wonderfully bedizened with gaudy tassels and jingling bells. The well-kept road winds between olive trees and the best cultivated fields of the island. Nowhere in Sardinia are the native costumes seen in all their original picturesqueness as in the suburbs of Sassari. The corsets of the women are bright with rainbow colors, gold embroidery and silver buttons; and the men wear a black jacket over a long waistcoat reaching to the knees, white trousers, black slippers, and long bagging cap like an exaggerated Phrygian bonnet.

We found the tomb rising out of a dense thicket of shrubs, with tufts of grass growing in the chinks and crannies of its old, old walls on hands knees, the lintel being a single stone, weighing at least two tons, supported by protruding jambs. This nuraghi is of one story, only 25 feet high, tapering upwards (all its apex is formed by a single stone. The interior is in perpetual shadow, no light being admitted except through the low passages in the double walls. Around the sides of the chamber four recesses are worked in the solid masonry, each about five feet high, three feet deep and three feet wide. Not a vestige of bone or dust remains to show that the dead slept in those gloomy cells before the dawn of history. How strange it is that the work of man endures, ages after the hands that wrought are turned to dust—after even their dust has disappeared!

At no small risk, we scrambled between the crumbling walls, up heaps of stones that once were stairs, to the top of the pulchre—marveling by what means that ponderous slab was raised which caps the cone. The view is fine from the summit of the green Sardinian plain; the gray, battlemented walls of the ancient city, its towers and domes and tall white houses rising out of dusky olive groves, and away to the west the shimmering Mediterranean and the bold outlines of Asinara Island.

Among many other relics of antiquity in Sardinia are the monoliths, or stone obelisks known to the natives as Pietra-fella, and perdi-lunga. They are from six to eighteen feet high, of conical outline and swelling gradually in the middle. Not unlike the Celtic remains, except that these never had any impost horizontal stone, like the trilitheons of Stonehenge. Probably they are relics of phallic worship (that of the sexes)—the creed held by all the heathen Syro-Arabian peoples.

Most interesting of all are the "Sepulchres de los Gigantes," or Tombs of the Giants, found everywhere in Sardinia. These are a series of large stones, placed together without cement, so as to enclose a trench, from fifteen to forty feet long and from three to six feet deep, covered with immense due from northwest to southeast; and at the southeast end rises a large, upright headstone, from ten to fifteen feet high, varying in form from square, elliptical, and to that of three-fourths of an egg; and always near the base is an aperture about eighteen inches square. On each side of this strange headstone commences a series of separate stones, irregular in size and shape, but

forming an immense arc. No doubt these were graves, in some forgotten time, but what manner of people made them, none can tell. The earliest forms of sepulcher, of which we have any knowledge are of upright stones with superincumbent slabs—such as the Druidical kistvaens, and the ancient tombs of Greece. As to the story of giants—there are many traditions concerning the former existence of a colossal race in Sardinia, as well as in the neighboring islands.

Its scanty population and rugged mountain ranges, with dark forests, have made Sardinia a very paradise for hunters; while its many rivers and salt lagoons, and the deep, still channels between the islets that line the coasts, abound in fish. Railroads and well-kept highways connect the towns and cities; but one has not far to go in any direction from the beaten paths to entire primeval wilderness. Beyond the vineyards and cultivated plains are vast upland plateaus, covered with chestnuts, oaks, beeches, larches—with dense thickets beneath and branching vines above, making perpetual twilight which no ray of sunshine penetrates. Higher and higher climb the forests, to the central region of mountain ridges, which enclose a sublime amphitheater of shelving and precipitous cliffs, rocks and pinnacles, brawling torrents and hanging woods. This is the haunt of red deer and mouflin, both lovely and lofty solitudes. The forests are full of partridges and many kinds of birds; and the barren plateaus are literally alive with hares and wild boars—the latter fattening upon the long, fibrous roots of the aspid, whose beautiful yellow flowers flourish where nothing else will grow. Were it not for its undeserved reputation for unhealthfulness, Sardinia would be thronged with sportsmen from all parts of Europe.

Each nuraghi was originally surrounded by a high wall, of which now only fragments remain. Generally it stands alone, but occasionally they are found in groups, in which case they are attached together by a doorway in the central tower. They are absolutely without any architectural ornament, or image, sculpture, inscription, to indicate their origin and purpose. Unlike the pyramids, whose mysteries are partially unveiled, the nuraghi furnish not a single hint by which their age or history may be discovered. It is certain, however, that they are of great antiquity, because in several places the ruins of Roman aqueducts and bridges themselves now in ruins, rest upon the stumps of desecrated nuraghi, and the earliest classical writers allude to them as unguessable mysteries even in their day. Some of the stones in the lower courses weigh many tons each, yet are arranged with perfect accuracy. Sardinians believe them to have been the work of giants, who are said to have once inhabited the island, but more probably the monuments are the results of unpaid labor, exacted by despotic chiefs, or instigated by religious devotion. At any rate, their rude but massive cones have survived the shocks of time and vicissitudes of empire which have destroyed the magnificent edifices of Babylon and Nineveh, Tyre and Thebes.

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MOMENTARY SANCTITY.

Weary Walker—All wot's good in my nature comes to de surface when Easter gets here.  
Hungry Hawkins—Dat's right, and if we could only swipe a chicken and some eggs we could celebrate de occasion.



Judge—Bright little dog you have there, Charlie.  
Cholly—Yes, Judge; you would be surprised to know how intelligent he is. Why, sometimes I think he knows almost as much as I do.  
Judge—Don't doubt it, don't doubt it.



WHY HE OUGHT TO HAVE THEM.

Bobby—Mamma, that little baby next door hasn't any teeth.  
Mamma—You didn't have any either when you were that small.  
Bobby—But that baby's papa is a dentist.



Smith—"Where in the world did you get those cigars you smoke?"  
Bagley—"A friend smuggled 'em over from Cuba; ain't dey great?"  
Smith—"They would be if you could only get some one to smuggle the smoke back again."



JARRED.  
Professor Beeswax—"According to this cook book, you didn't make the omelet correctly."  
Bridget—"An do' th' book say anything about your not having paid me wages for three months?"

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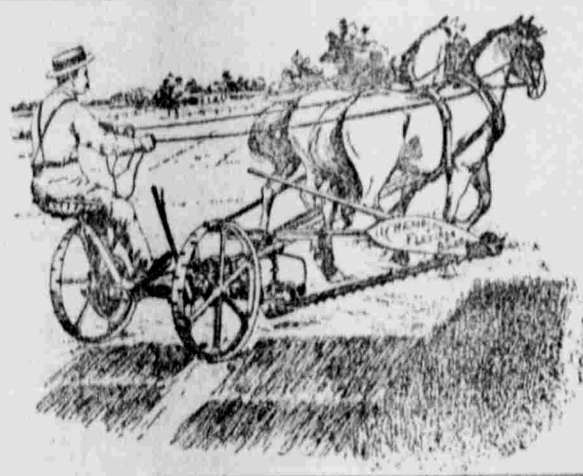
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