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OUCHY — AND ITS CASTLE.

From time immemorial Ouchy has been a fisher's hamlet, a port to which slow moving craft have brought passengers and merchandise from other villages and towns situated on the shores of this beautiful inland sea, Lake Lemman. Early in the XIth century, Landri de Durnes, Bishop of Lausanne, caused a fortified tower to be built on a rocky islet just outside the primitive port of his day. In the following centuries, the House of Savoy, whose warlike Counts desired above all things territorial and political expansion, entered into conflict with the powerful prince-bishops of the Cathedral city of Lausanne; the armies of Savoy invaded the Pays de Vaud, time and time again, and it is interesting to note that they brought with them also the military and colonizing influence of the Court of the English Plantagenets. In 1236, Henry III son of King John of Magna Carta fame, married Eleonor of Provence whose mother was Beatrice of Savoy. Through this connection, the English court was constantly enlivened by the visits of warrior knights of the small mountain kingdom, while Henry's barons and military advisors freely gave their advice to "Uncle Pierre" — Pierre II of Savoy — for the building of his keeps and castles in the Lake Lemman region. Traces of the English nobles' sojourn are still extant: at Pully near Lausanne, for instance, the pulpit of an old, but restored Romanesque church still bears the arms of a noble Hampshire family.

Bishop Landri's keep at Ouchy was destroyed in 1207 by a predecessor of Count Pierre and later in the century was rebuilt and transformed into the dungeon of a medieval castle, used as a summer residence by the Bishops who had, by that time, become the vassals of the House of Savoy.

Ouchy certainly seems to have been predestined to become an international rendezvous. It was in this castle that, in the year 1300, Bishop Guillaume de Champvent signed a peace treaty with a son of Count Pierre. One century later, Bishop Guillaume de Menthonay received the visit of Amédée VIII of Savoy, a strange, romantic figure who wrested a dukedom for his dynasty, was proclaimed pope and finally abandoned his spiritual and temporal powers to end his life as a hermit in his castle of Ripaille on the southern shores of Lake Lemman.

The domination of the House of Savoy was broken in 1536, when the followers of Calvin broke the power of Catholicism. The territory of Vaud and Lausanne did not rejoice long, however, for the Free City of Berne, which had long coveted this luxuriant countryside and won several territorial advantages in the region during the Burgundian Wars in 1476, suddenly marched in with its armies and took possession of the land. Fearful of retaliation from Savoy, the Bernese at first kept the Castle of Ouchy in good repair but later abandoned it to its fate after the peace treaty of 1617 signed with the warlike Dukedom.

In 1685, Western Switzerland was overrun by French Huguenots fleeing their country after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the now ruined castle was opened to French craftsmen who were allowed to set up their booths and shops in the once proud courtyard where medieval splendour had blossomed.


Meanwhile, in the course of centuries, the rocky islet had been gradually transformed into a spur of

land; sand and earth had silted in and joined it to the mainland.

For two centuries, the glory of the Castle was forgotten; outhouses and barns were added and it became a huddle of indefinite buildings. In 1884, Lausanne's go-ahead businessman of the day, J. J. Mercier, bought the Castle from the State of Vaud and set about transforming it into a spacious hotel. The old keep was restored and served as the central part of this "modern" luxury hotel which, with its gilt and plush, pleased late Victorian and Edwardian travellers.

Thus restored, the Castle was destined to know a few glorious years. It was here that in 1912 the Italo-Turk Peace Treaty was signed. In 1923 the Lausanne Conference summoned European statesmen and placed Ouchy on the map; in 1932, the Hôtel du Château was the scene of the Reparations Conference. And this chapter of the Castle's history closed last year when it was the stage of the Preparatory International Committee for Displaced Persons.

Ouchy, with its quiet, green parks, its gay flowerbeds, has aroused the admiration of countless generations of travellers. It was at the Hôtel de l'Ancre (now the Hôtel d'Angleterre) that Byron composed his famous "Prisoner of Chillon." As a thoughtless student Edward Gibbon got into trouble for "rowdy comportment" with the police of the hamlet of Ouchy; Charles Dickens and his large family admired the still romantic beauty of the port.



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