

few straggling flowers and a few trees, among them the laurel. I plucked a branch of the laurel leaves which Napoleon so delighted to see on his own brow. A railing encloses the garden at the edge of the cliff and at the base, more than a hundred feet below, the sea was beating in a white foam. Napoleon used to take the steep climb down to bathe in the salt water. From the garden he often watched with a glass the shores of Italy a dozen miles away and also the ships on that unstable element which had balked so many of his plans.

The Mulini palace was well enough, perched on its rocky height, but it gave little chance for free movement. Napoleon could not stir out without being haunted by petitioners and sightseers. He planned to have residences at every important point on the island. At Porto Longone he made one of the existing houses his own; at Rio he caused Pons, the Director of Mines in the island, to vacate his house and go elsewhere. The place, however, which he made especially his own was the little villa at San Martino, three or four miles from Porto Ferraio. It was to be the St. Cloud to the urban imperial residence of the Mulini. It is perhaps the most beautiful spot in the island. The bay of Porto Ferraio is surrounded by a natural amphitheatre of mountains. Napoleon found a cottage built at the point in this amphitheatre which would correspond to the spot exactly fronting the centre of the stage in a theatre. The mountains curve round the bay on either side and the blue waters, and Porto Ferraio in the near background and the high coast of Italy in the distance, furnish the scenery on which the observer looks. The setting is perfect. Napoleon, barbarian though in many respects he was, had a real eye for beauty. He bought this place, and spent upon it in all about 180,000 francs. He added to the house; but its two floors contain only a dozen rooms. A Russian prince, who had married the daughter of Napoleon's brother Jerome, acquired the property in the course of time, and built on a lower level than the house a great museum for Napoleonic relics. The roof of this museum has been added to the garden of Napoleon's house. The objects formerly in the museum have long been scattered; the great building alone remains and the whole property has passed into the hands of a Florentine gentleman who is generous in allowing visitors to see it.

An avenue lined with richly laden orange trees furnished the approach to the house. I found the caretaker working in a vineyard. Other visitors had been there a few days earlier—some of the officers of the British fleet which had made a visit to Porto Ferraio: the terrible Briton haunts even the memorials of Napoleon! The caretaker unlocked doors for me and opened windows. Here, too, Napoleon built a hall, the size of a modest drawing-room in a country house.