LECTURE

2. III. 31. Cistus sp.
3. II. 3. Cistus sp.
4. III. 29. Genista & Lavandula
5. III. 27. Genista sp.
7. II. 20. Asphodelus sp. (nr. Calvi)
8. I. 25. " " (nr. Porto)
9. II. 8. Allium pendulinum (nr. Calvi)
10. III. 33. " " (nr. Ajaccio)
11. I. 4. Pointe de Parata - maquis-covered hillside
12. III. 32. Serapias lingua - pale pink form group
13. III. 20. " " - red form
15. III. 25. " cordinera - group
17. III. 23. " neglecta
18. III. 22. " " - c.u.
19. IV. 2. " " X cordinera
22. III. 25. Pointe de Parata - Oenothera habitat
23. III. 34. Senecio leucanthemifolius ?
24. IV. 10. Tour de Parata
25. IV. 12. Iles Sanguinaires
26. IV. 11. Narcissus tazetta
27. IV. 9. Silene sp.
28. IV. 13. Pointe de Parata - Matthiola habitat
29. IV. 4. Matthiola tricuspidata
30. IV. 6. " "
31. IV. 7. " "
32. II. 2. Porto - Hotel du Pont
33. I. 21. Capo d'Orto - Cytisus in foreground
34. I. 16. Valley below Capo d'Orto
35. I. 7. Cyclamen repandum
36. I. 8. Aroid
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40. I. 15. Tour de Porto across river
41. I. 13. Daphobria wulfenii ?
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43. I. 18. " Pancratium illyricum
44. I. 6. Road to Ota
45. I. 22. Lunch !
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23. Calvi - the harbour.
29. Pointe de la Revellata - from east
31. Erodium corsicum
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40. Muscaris comosum
41. Labiate
42. Road to Bonifato valley
46. Ornithogalum exscapum
47. Digging Ornithogalum
48. Sedum auriculatum
34. Corsican interior from Calvi to Bastia
49. Monte d'Oro
51. Road from Petranera to Accquala
3. Anemone hortensis
1. Ophrys sphegodes
13. Photographing Ophrys
14. Coming down to Ertalunga from Cap Marse
8. Sunset over Bastia
During late March and early April of this year, I spent a pleasant if somewhat hectic three weeks chasing around the Mediterranean island of Corsica in a search for some of the many bulbs and orchids which inhabit this wild, rugged, - almost enchanted, - island.

This evening, I would like to try to give you some impression of the many charms of this island and hope that you will enjoy coming with me in search of plants around its northern shores.

Most of this island is covered with a dense and matted overgrowth of shrubby vegetation - the maquis - once trodden by the ill-famed Corsican bandits and now deserted.
only by the goats and cattle of the peasants. This one of the bases of the beautiful Sometimes it is only knee-high but elsewhere it may overtop a tall man and all too often it forms an unfriendly—sometimes impermeable—to the dressier, for those who wish to journey up the through it for the traveller. The shrubs which form the backbone of vegetation vary with the district and with the altitude but most frequently it was the Cista species which commanded the scene. Two of them in particular were of much evidence. The one is Cista monspesulanum—a tall-growing shrub of anything up to 8 ft. with profuse in dark and narrow, sticky leaves and an abundance of white flowers, which one forgives for their small size because of their abundance
The other was probably *C. enigmata* a much lower-growing plant with much larger flowers—a very fine thing. It had soft, almost woolly leaves as opposed to *C. miniata* the shiny ones of *C. monspessulanus*. We also found another taller-growing *C. miniata* with leaves similar to those of *C. corymbosa* but with large flowers of crumpled rose-pink satin—A lovely if somewhat fleshy plant, which stubbornly refused to be photographed. Whenever we found it the flowers were either in bad condition or in an inaccessible position. On the one occasion when we found it in a photographable specimen and Janette Stephen, who incidentally took all the transparencies you will see tonight, had all the inevitable paraphernalia set up and ready for action, action came unexpectedly in the form of a gust of wind which blew every petal off the flower. For the same reason I was unable to secure
a presentable herbarium specimen and so too
cannot supply you with the name of this
definite
perverse plant... Have almost certainly
In considering some of the Corsican Cistus
species, I may as well mention some more
of the more obvious members of the island's flora
so that you can have a background against
which to set the more individualistic species,
which we found on our travels. And I said
the tangled maquis may be composed of a
variety
A
Cistuses are often much in evidence, here a
golden Genista, and the royal purple
lavender, Lavandula stoechas. The Genista
was often really laden with flowers and here
a heavily gold-encrusted branch arches
from a sturdy grey shrub into the air over façio's four. Another
typical plant of the Corsican maquis is
Erica arborea, the tree heath, 
no doubt well known to most of you. It is,
However, a plant of the lower altitudes and its place is taken higher up by the dwarf Corsican Heath, Erica stricta, an endemic species. It is a magnificent plant to my mind and I have never seen the colour of its flowers which tend to appear as a dirty greyish white when viewed from a distance. The assets far outweigh its liabilities; the plumes of mossy green foliage and its upward-sprung branches have always a delight to me in winter and the scent of the masses of tiny blooms is hearty and exotic. Between the masses of the Corsican heath are famous, deservedly famous, and at least nearly as good perhaps the finest, from Callenuran in the north comes its delicacy of flavour to the plant. I feel on reflecting for Erica as the herb on yet another count a valuable artefact fashioned from the hard, woody root of the shrub, called by the French, "arbre"; the same anglicised gave us the word briar, the bow of briar pipes. The type of plant is not always
The poet laureate of Spain, Federico García Lorca, found his inspiration in the rural areas of Spain, often depicting the life of the peasants and the landscape with a deep sense of nostalgia. His works often resided in the harsh reality of rural Spain, where life was hard and the struggle for survival was daily. In his poetry, Lorca captured the essence of the rural life, painting a picture of simplicity and beauty in the face of adversity.
can

from the shrubs of the maquis, we turn to
the most common plant of the meadows and
open spaces | Asphodelus ramosus |

which often grows in a fantastic profusion. Here
in a | meadow near Calvi | it grows much as
one imagines the Asphodels should grow in
the Elysian fields of the Greek heroes. It is
an attractive plant with great thong-like roots
of which revol on the heavy clay and cultivate
shavings of the pasture land. The candelabra
bush of flower stems reach 5 or 6 ft. in height
and the flowers are pale-pink with a brown
stripe down the middle of each segment. It would
make a fine border plant but is not always
absolutely hardy. I did however collect a

very similar | Asphodel | at about over 7,000 ft
in the | Atlas mountains of Morocco; and this
would surely be hardy anywhere in Britain.

The most common | Cesarion bulb | is
indistinguishable | Allium pendulum | . The French
Rubbed = 5 mins.
call it simply 'oil sausage' - wild garlic - and it has the typical strong smell of the genus but only when the bases plant is crushed do gardeners do not make a habit of trampling down their plants, I can see no reason to reject it on this count. It is closely related to Allium triquetrum with which it is often confused. I have found in fact some botanists of the Edinburgh Botanic Garden will use it to include it under this species. But from the gardener's viewpoint it is quite distinct with far larger flowers and it is reputed to be not in the least rampant in cultivation. In China it often grows in great quantity as here by the sea near Ulcin shelved by the giant stems of the bamboo like Orundo donax. It is a plant of the ditches, streamsides and damp hollows and will appreciate some moisture in shade cultivation also. It will grow from anything between 3 inches and to over 18 in
height. If you can get some idea of the plants
brought back from Corseca and which flowered
last weekend. The elegantly pointed segments
are striped centrally with a neat green line
and the flowers are quite large for an
Allium.

If you have some impression of what
vegetation is most apparent among the Corsecan plants,
I should like to take you with us to have a
look some of plants that inhabit the
maquis itself. We shall start our journey
at Ajaccio; the islands capital and more
of a market town than an industrial
centre. West of the town a prominent
point projects out into the sea, the Pointe de
la Parata and this was our collecting area
and the home of many rare and very beautiful
species[1]. It is clothed with the usual
maquis and it was on this very hillside
that we found a number of Scorpius specie...
growing in profusion. Serapias are the tuberous-rooted terrestrial orchids and in my opinion by far the most beautiful of the orchid family to be found in Europe. Their curious name is derived from that of an ancient Egyptian deity, \textit{Serapis}, which the locals flowers are said to resemble. This one is the most common species, \textit{Serapias doria}, a very large plant. This is not a good form, but the photograph shows how these plants grow among grasses and other associated wild flowers. All the plants in this group are identical and it is obvious that they are all derived vegetatively from the single original ancestor. Quite a remarkable process, considering the size of the plant and the clump must be very old. \textit{Serapias doria}, though not the most spectacular species can be a very lovely plant and this is a good form of it. The flowers are very highly coloured lip.
from pure white or buff, yellow shading through pink to a deepish wine colour. I found a little group of all three form growing in a solid red clay higher up the hill from this plant, but the flowers were small and the tubers small and weak. I feel that this deeply coloured form cannot be bittered. The lip in *Serapias lingua* is always fairly narrow and pointed and much of the attractiveness is provided by these coloured leaves; the spathes which sheathe the flower spike. A more spectacular species is *Serapias cordigera*, which has a larger heart-shaped lip like a flannel, velvety pocket handkerchief. It is not such a variable plant as *S. lingua* and the lip is always of this deep, pure crimson. When one finds these breathtaking orchids growing in such profusion in Corsica it is difficult to believe that they are among the world's rare plants. I honestly doubt it.
there is any part of the world in which they could be seen growing in such quantity.

There are only five species in the genus, and we found the three most decorative in the area west of Cyoccio, the other two, *Sarcopas nemorosa* and *Sarcopas parviflora* are rather squarish-flowered species and do not merit much attention. Botanically, *S. cordigera* is distinguished by the broad, heart-shaped leaf and this characteristic it shares with the only species which I have not mentioned so far, *S. neglecta*. This is the root of the genus, and I did not expect to see this species during our stay.

However, I was busy searching for the amethyst or copper Cistus bushes for good colour forms of *Sarcopas lindia*, while Janette was busy photographing these plants when I suddenly noticed something different resting low in the
Close inspection revealed this most exquisite orchid. It was undoubtedly Serapias neglecta. This rarity is restricted to a very few stations in the south of Italy, the south of France, and the Ionian islands, but is becoming increasingly rare on the mainland. A diligent search revealed one other plant, so I did not feel too guilty about collecting this one and I am glad to say the new tuber is now poking up a tentative new shoot with meat home. It is quite distinct from all the other Serapias in the huge flowers and their colour, which is usually a little more suffused with brick red on the lip. After finding Serapias neglecta, I thought that the genus had no more excitement in store for me. How wrong I was! The following day, we collected again on the Pointe de Paulet, but further west this time. I intensely dislike having to walk along roads while out collecting. I noticed a narrow grassy path branching off
flourished in our midst between the annals of the past, and it is certain we are not. All at once, the sun's rays dazzlingly penetrated the atmosphere, and we were faced with the realization of the cyclical nature of life. S. condylurum, a plant we had learned to cherish, was about to expire. The minute we first perceived the approach of the end, we knew what was to come. The little pools of brilliant light on the ground before us were not the most beautiful, but they were certainly a sight to behold. If they certainly parted the plants of the ground, then we had truly seen a significant moment.

As the sun set, the ground before us was shaded by the ditches and ditches, and we turned the corner on a most wonderful road. We made our way up and up, until we reached the ditches and ditches, and we turned the corner on a most wonderful road. We made our way up and up, until we reached the ditches and ditches, and we turned the corner on a most wonderful road. We made our way up and up, until we reached the ditches and ditches, and we turned the corner on a most wonderful road.
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"understood of the phenomena in chemistry." The greatest
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and when the flower spike is developing you really cannot overwater, a little liquid manure given at weekly intervals helps the next year's tuber to develop. As soon as flowering is over, the pot should be dried-off gradually until the plant has died back completely. From then onwards, you cannot make the pot of soil too much until late September when a little water should be given to start them into growth again. The whole secret is in carefully controlled watering. However, they are temperamental beauties and it is difficult to keep them for long in cultivation, though once the plants have settled down they start to increase slowly by producing offset tubers. The main trouble is that we have no satisfactory way of propagating available plants and the only way of replenishing one's plants is by collecting them abroad. This practice is to be
Much deprecated wherever the plants are rare, though gardeners' collecting activities would make little more impression on most orchid colonies, the real enemies are non-native "development projects", such as land drainage, re-afforestation, dam construction and building. With the increase of such activities the territorial orchids of Europe are becoming increasingly rare and are being pushed into a few wild corners of the continent like the Spanish maquis where I hope they will long survive in their secluded splendour.

After collecting the Gerpias we made our way back down to the sea shore and progressed along the coast, along the little areas of sea-washed stuff which the French botanists aptly call "prairies maritimes". These were the homes of a number of Ronulea spp, and the patch two species grew in close association among the grasses. When we located them only the seed capsules remained but when...
they

were in flower earlier in the year, the
ground must have changed to violet with
the first warm rays of the February sun.

Of course, I have little idea which species
we collected here until they flower in
cultivation but I suspect that the taller of the
two is the pale mauve flowered *R. jordani*
and the other the deep violet *R. atrorubacea.*

We spent several hours grubbing about on the
grass on our hands and knees collecting the
seeds and corms of these plants and I shall
be sending some seed of these two into the
A.G.S. distribution so that I hope some of
you may be encouraged to try these lovely little things which are almost
unknown in cultivation. They are easy to
raise from seed though I admit none too
easy to flower, though they are worth every
effort.

By this time becoming late when we
finally decided we had collected sufficient
Rumiles set off we set on the five miles back to Ajaccio. On the seaward side, of us grew occasional bushes of this beautiful silvery shrub Senecio-leucanthemophyllum, light glittering silver, in the late afternoon sun, teetering playfully, growing flat on the gravelly ground.
I had been anxious to reach the farthest promontory of the Pointe de Pantata, where several interesting plants grow, but as usual our collecting activities prevented our progress. However, on our last day in Ajaccio we a bus service had started to operate once daily out to the point. The timetables of buses seem to be regarded as state secrets and no one ever knows just when they are going to run but we eventually boarded the night vehicle. The driver drove with the usual disregard for both his passengers and any other road users who dared to approach him from the opposite direction. We were soon out of the Pointe de Pantata. Our driver, then, dowered, a gay and handsome if somewhat greasy fellow.
the next few hours to the three other passengers, or more particularly to a young lady, the daughter of a wealthy family, who seemed to be on holiday with papa and maman. In fact relations seemed to have progressed so well that on the return journey he had to stop the bus to present them with a ring of myrtle each in memory of Coca. While the driver directed his attentions to the said young lady, we directed our attentions to the surrounding country. Before we left the tower, the Torre de Pintada, it is one of a series of such towers which ring Corseca's coasts. They were built by the Genoese who occupied the island for many years as a warning system against the attacks of the Barbary pirates, whose came across from north Africa to pillage and pillage plunder. The towers are so arranged that a signal fire lit on one is visible and so on round the island. Beyond the tower stretched theiles Sanguineuses, a cluster of pink
granite islands which often looked like blood red jewels in the sunset although when we saw them on a bleak, grey afternoon they were rather uninteresting.

But here at the Îles Sanguinaires, live many very interesting plants and was anxious to collect one in particular, the stemless form of a little Stock, Matthiola tricuspidata. We went north from the tower along the western tip of the point. Soon Narcissus tazetta appeared growing here and there among the rocks. This lovely plant whose organs are most obscure is self identical to the Tazetta Narcissus which forces so admirably for Christmas - flowering in bowls. It grows in many places around the Mediterranean and the Near East, in fact all the way from Spain and Morocco to Kashmir. At the same time was pleasant to meet such a familiar friend in its own home. Nearby the
large, tattered leaves of the weird twined, Helicospermum mucronatum, being cut from under a shrub but it would have needed a pick and shovel to extract the massive tubers to we had to pass it by. A charming little Silene grew in the rock crevices, quite probably S. S., though we admired the flower shaded from pale blush pink to quite a deep rose and the habit was quite prostrate. We have seen so many good Silenes in cultivation, though, that this one, though quite pleasant was not desperately exciting, and did not merit collection. We continued along the rocky coast and suddenly noticed one plant which we were searching for lying on the ground, Matthiola tricuspidata. This form, however, was just a little leafy and not compact enough for my liking. I knew that there must be better ones in the area.
Eventually, I found their home and quite an extraordinary habitat it was, a steep slope banked down onto the rocky sea. It was composed of clay mixed with sharp flakes and lumps of granite and all over it were dotted the flowers of the Matthiola. It was a rather awkward place to collect in as the slope gave way at an angle of about 70° and sent showers of gravel tumbling down onto the sea below with every movement I made. I believe I am visible as a black speck in this photograph and just after Janette had taken it the rock on which I was balancing disengaged itself and shot down the bank only managing to go a long drop on to the jagged rocks of the sea below by a chance grab at a piece of projecting granite. Notwithstanding such minor excitement, I did manage to collect a small number of Matthiola.
seedlings with the roots intact. The ten nine plants were sent to three of our leading amateur alpine gardeners and I know that at least one plant has settled down and actually produced a couple of flowers last August, so that I do hope we shall be able to add it to our collection of alpine house plants sometime in the future. It is such a very beautiful thing, the tight rosettes of wrinkled, fleshy, notched leaves are woolly and grey and on this little cluster sit the very large four-petalled flowers absolutely stemless. These are of a pure pale mauve and of a crystalline texture, much the same colour as the famed

*E. juncata heldreichii*

From Giarocco we made our way we travelled north along the spectacular Cosenza coast to Porto. She was as pickety as ever and we settled and swung along the
- twisting roads. Soon darkness began to fall and rain came with it. The headlights of the bus barely pierced the surrounding gloom. How the driver found his way I shall never know, but he seemed to know every turn of the tortuous road intimately. I began to get concerned as we had no hotel bookings in Porto and it was going to be difficult to find anywhere in a small village in the darkness and pouring rain. Help came in the form of our driver. His son-in-law, he said, owned a hotel in Porto—it was of a good one and we should be sure of a couple of rooms at that time of year. We willingly clutched at this straw and were eventually installed in our rooms, which though simple were surprisingly fresh and clean. We had no idea of what or where exactly we were staying, but the next morning we found ourselves in the most charming inn imaginable.
We were situated one mile from the sea and from the tourist hotels of the second Porto by the sea. In front of us the rugged peaks came across the valley of the river Porto and behind our inn towered the jagged tower of La Pianetta. It was not a high mountain but rises almost straight up from the sea to 2,600 ft. It was, in fact, the most fascinating mountain I have ever known; its changes of mood were sudden and violent. In morning mists drifted mysteriously around its towers and its colour was ever changing from sullen smoky grey to misty blues and glaring orange as the setting sun lit its flint granite face with an inward glow. It was to me a fairy tale mountain on whose peak I was always expecting to see a strange castle
On the north side of the mountain a valley lay, and it was up this cleft we made our way up the goat paths among the maquis. I had a desire to reach the secess and cliffs high up this valley but we never did. The path eventually disappeared, and the maquis grows thick and impossible. But I think that I shall always have a vague desire to know this mountain better and to penetrate what appeared to me as a cloak of mystery. In the lower reaches of this valley, thinly wooded with an undergrowth of maquis, grow thousands of Cyclamen pendulum. Dusting in the deep shade and pure leaf mould. It is a most typical Corsican plant, which the natives themselves take a delight in. They can be seen on Sundays clutching little bunches of the scented, carmine flowers. The species is distributed throughout the island, but for all its shrivettesness it is remarkably choosy regarding its habitat and in this valley
It grew only on the west facing side of the valley, the conditions on the opposite slope offered more or less identical but only the odd stragglers appeared. On both sides Cyclamen neapolitanum leaves were much in evidence. It is the autumn-flowering counterpart of C. repandum and likewise carpets the woodlands with pink. The rare pure-white form of C. repandum is found only in Corsica. I had hoped to collect a few but the coms were not flowering as well as they should have done on account of the dry season and we certainly saw no white-flowered plant among the thousands near Porto.

Rocks bordered the woodland path and in narrow humuse crevices grew a strange little arid. I have to offer Janette's apologies and explanation for the over-exposed photograph. Like the transferral of Cyclamen repandum, it was taken with flash in the dark woodland but in this instance the plant
was growing in a little cave among the rocks. The angle of the flash reflector the light heads bounced off the wet granite rocks with result that the exposure they acted as double reflectors and overlit the subject. However, as it is the only photograph we have of the plant we decided to include it.

The botanists have not quite definitely identified this yet— they think that it is probably a Brachium sp. of some sort. And I think that it is certainly a variety or subspecies of Brachium vulgaris.

Anyhow, it is a captivating little plant with an almost imperceptible particular sort of melancholy aura about the flowers. The spadix curves round and droops sadly from the green and white striped spathe in a way that cannot but arouse a certain sympathy for the poor little fellow.

Around us in the woodland, the leaves of Muscari convolvulus and Allium pendulimum lay about and on one grassy bank beneath some broom we found the spotted leaves of Orthio provincialis. We were soon out of the woodland though and came abruptly...
on an area of rocky pasturage enclosed by dry stone dykes and with a few similarly constructed shelters. It was obviously a refuge where the cattle for the wintering the cattle of the peasants grazed all summer on the young growth of the maquis shrubs and as many of these are aromatic a most delicate flavour is imparted to their flesh. Often we would hear the tinkling of the bells around the animals' necks but as they meandered among the thick growth, but we saw a cow only once. The place was deserted but all over it grew clumps of the Cornish Helichrysum bracteatum. Each one was a magnificent plant bearing several hundred of the large apple-green blossoms. We had already seen it lower down in the maquis where it grows tall and awkward, among the surrounding shrubs. Here it may reach anything up to 3 ft in height, but it is a mere caricature of these plants. A lot of you will have this plant and I hope those of you who don't will waste no time in procuring it because it is
by far the best of the Hellebores species. Some of you who do grow it will no doubt have it as H. nivicola but it is now to be referred to as H. argyrophylla, if we want to keep up with Joneses. But 'what's in a name' — I shall not complete the much quoted lines! In any case, this plant is a really good one — the dark green leaves are ever a source of pleasure to the discriminating gardener and the flower spikes provide a decorative feature for eight months of the year, standing freely with in brilliant green until the month of February slowly changing to hang papery and parchment-coloured until September and never in any instance touched by frost or wind or rain. If we want to grow a compact many-flowered clump like this the answer lies before us. These specimens were growing right out in the open but every one grew from under the base of a large granite boulder where the soil would always be cool and damp. The soil of the pasture was very heavy stony clay and was covered with
In heavy soil with much humus, it is possible
cattle droppings. In other words, plant where
the roots are always cool and moist but where
it can reach its head into the sun. These
plants were never touched by the cattle, as the
animals knew their poisonous properties all too
well and leave them strictly alone.

From the meadow of the Hellebores we
went straight across to the opposite side of
the valley, descending and then climbing up
through dense, high marquis full of brambles
and a pernicious, spiny Aristolochia, which
tore at our clothes and arms as we struggled
through. Eventually we came out on to an open,
massive, shoulder slide, which we chambered
up to the pink granite cliffs at the top.

There before us an amazing plant draped down
the cliffs before us, as a clothing it with a
30 ft curtain of pure deep blue. It was
Resurrection Prostratus, a most extraordinary
species. The strangest thing about our
discovery was that there was not another similar
specimen either in the immediate area or in the whole Porto district. The plants habits were absolutely prostrate and the stems root down the crevices in the rock all along their length. The color of the flowers was a pure, deep blue not anything like the dimal colour produced by the Rodachrome film. Rodachrome gives a better colour rendering but this is still not quite right intense enough. However, you can get some idea of the beauty of these dark blue flowers clothing the very branches as they cascaded 30 ft down the pink granite cliff. We made our way slowly down over the boulder slide and down the valley to our little inn where the usual handsome meal awaited us. As a matter of fact we spent two days collecting bells and helianium spearns in the valley on Isla Pianetta before turning to another area. We decided to take the main coast road back towards the north. This took us along the side
of the estuary of the River Porto. Below us we could see the Lout de Porto, a similar structure to the one on the Parata near Chaccomo, and beyond the red-roofed houses of the part of Porto down by the sea. In the background stretched the vast mass of the Ponta Bianca, hazy blue in the morning sunshine. I thought that the scrub-covered, silted up River-mouth would be a good collecting area, and we climbed down to it. A magnificent plant of Euphorbia willdenii, fully 5 ft. high, greeted us when we emerged from the shrubby slope. We found it to be far more common farther up the valley where we went there the next day, but nowhere did we find such a fine specimen as this. It grew in the fine, rich alluvial sand of the old river-bed and I have no doubt it sent its roots down to tap some underground supply of water, percolating...
beneath the surface. It is a plant of the utmost value in the garden, where its tall stems with chartreuse, yellow and blue-green leaves can provide an arresting architectural feature if properly sited. It should be planted where it can display its character to perfection, not jumbled up with herbaceous plants but at the end of a sweeping lawn or curving paving; backed by a grey-stone wall or rising before a group of shrubs.

Apart from the Euphorbia we found little of interest in the river-bed, only the deep green, white-splashed leaves of Atriplex pumila commanded our attention. Disappointed after much unwrangling searching, we turned to the rocky, north-facing bank of the estuary. Here we found evidence of many interesting plants, though only Cyclamen repandum was in flower. The steep slope was covered with giant angular slabs of granite and dotted with a sparse
The leaves of growth of maquis, Cistus provincialis and a Serapias species appeared deep and there with the ivy leaves of Selinum nepalitanum and in one or two crevices on the giant boulders grew clumps of Romulea leaves. Romulea foliage is fine and grass-like, so the corms often grow associated with grasses; it is all too often invisible to the unpracticed eye. Jonette and I used to try with each other to determine who could spot the largest number. However, once one acquires the technique, if it can be called such, one seldom passes a Romulea by. Here I am collecting the tiny corms from a humus filled pocket where they filled the narrow crevices with their grass. I think that it worth my while to point out the location of these corms: the slope is facing north west and the sunlight is filtering down from behind through the surrounding shrubs. The situation is typical. In a recent note in the Gardens Chronicle, the writer referred to the genus being
native to the sun-baked rocks of the Mediterranean
the statement could not be further from the
truth regarding Romulea or in fact any other
bulbs. North, east and west-facing slopes are
the places in which to search for bulbous plants;
dry, south-facing slopes are almost invariably
very unremunerative. Romuleas are usually either
plants of slightly shaded rock crevices or of clayey
damp pasture land, although one does find the
gold species which grows in dry gravelly soil.
Another plant of the larger crevices here
was Pancratium illyricum. The massive
bulbs do not flower until May but we
dug a few growing deep in the loose leafmould
Sometimes the long-necked bulbs, which may
up to 2 lbs, have the unpleasant habit of
hiding beneath an immovable boulder but large
one was easily extricated by shovelling away
the loose leafmould with a trowel until
the bulb appeared. The Pancratiums are one of
the most spectacular features of the Cotezan
flora and it must indeed be a breath-taking sight to see them flowering in May or June with their large clusters of white flowers, like bunches of pure white daffodils.

These rocky slopes were so remunerative that we spent the next morning collecting there so that it was almost mid-day before we set off straight up the valley from away from the sea towards the village of Vila. We had intended, as was our habit, to climb up from the village of Porto and before setting off. "We intended" as was our habit, to purchase our lunch in the shops of the village fresh, crisp French bread from the dark, sweet smelling bakery, some of the creamy Coalican goat or sheep cheeses and a few of the small and piquantly refreshing Coalican oranges. That day, however, we had forgotten that in France the small shops are closed from 12 o'clock until 2, so
that our first day was a lunchless one. Lunchless that is but for a scrap of dry cheese and a quarter of a loaf of the previous day's bread, which I had discovered in the depths of my rucksack. One is apt to work up a good appetite while out collecting so that our chagrin that day was great and we took this photograph of our sad, little lunch as a reminder to ourselves and others of the closing time of French provincial shops. After lunch we collected Scoparia contigua in the surrounding meadows and on our return discovered this rather charming fellow-investigating our rucksacks! Corsican mules are more or less given the run of the country and, I believe, they are quite a hazard on the roads in summer, especially at night, when they find the warmth of the tarmac road provides them with a pleasant place on which to sleep. We found little in flower, though we did collect a number of Romulea corsica out
of flower. The real object of our journey was to collect a rare Caucasian endemic, Leucojum longifolium, which had been recorded from the rocky hillside behind Ota. There are two Leucojum species native to Caucasus: one autumn-flowering and one spring-flowering. The first is the pink Leucojum roseum, which we found later at Calve, and the latter is Leucojum longifolium. It was the great disappointment of our trip that we did not collect this species anywhere. Every time we set out to reach a recorded habitat but arch-enemy 'time' won the race and we had to return to our hotel before the place could be reached. In this instance we reached the village of Ota, a picturesque Mediterranean hill-village, just as the rays of the setting sun were planting across the valley. We had no time for plant-collecting and had completed the five miles down-hill to Porto in record time. It had
been a stiff uphill climb but going back we took less than an hour, spurred on by the swiftly falling darkness and the emptiness of our stomachs.

The following day we once again moved on our way northwards to the town of Calvi which, laden with an ever-increasing load of plants and a now-bulging herbarium press, Calvi is a delightful little fishing village throughout most of the year but in summer it changes to a tourist paradise on which the French descend in the inevitable hundreds of sun-seekers, seeking joyful humanity.

We were glad to have the opportunity to sample its quieter charms, its lobster pots and pine-trees, its long stretches of deserted sands and the snow-capped mountains across the blue waves of the bay.

From Calvi we went out in two directions to collect plants. Along the coast to
the wind-swept Punta de Revellata, and inland toward the Bonifatto valley and Monte Grosso. First of all we shall take the route along the sea shore to the Punta de Revellata. The narrow gravelly path goes almost straight along the coast between low bushes of the dwarf, compact, grey-leaved Genista holbii. I was looking about among these dwarf golden shrubs as we went along when suddenly Ionette called out to me. She had spotted a brilliant little violet flower lying right on the path beneath our feet. It was a Romulea and, by spite of the fact that we collected hundreds of coriandro, it was the only one we found in flower. So little information is available on this genus and there are so few herbarium specimens in British herbaria that I cannot be certain as to the identity of the plant. But I am pretty sure that it is Romulea sequens, the most common Cretan species. It is a very
beautiful little bulbs with these most exquisite, violet-flow imperial violet flowers, the size of a half-crown, sitting almost right on the ground. The Romuleas are closely related to the Crocuses, from which they differ mainly in the possession of a flower-stem, whereas Crocuses are supported on the corolla-tube, and in having a different leaf structure. They are in reality primitive ancestors of the Crocuses. We do not have a single species in general cultivation a fact which may seem surprising as they are often the most brightly-coloured and jewel-like of bulbs. On the other hand, they are not easy to grow and flower satisfactorily. If grown outside their little flowers would be battered to anonymity tattered by the February rain and wind and even if grown in pots in the alpine house they do not always flower regularly and they have the major disadvantage of only showing their flowers in sunshine. Nevertheless, I find the plants of great interest.
and I can honestly say that among bulbous plants they come in my affections second only to the Zygopetalum species. I have been referring these Romuleas as bulbs but they are, of course, corms. The corms of the Romulea regnellii were a usual, about the size of a large pea. This late straggler was the only one in flower but many other grew among the foot-high hummocks of Gentian lobelia.

While digging them I came upon innumerable leaves of Serapias lingua, and suddenly saw another orchid the Green-veined Orchid: Orchis morio. It is a British orchid which many of you have no doubt seen growing wild in this country but we had found so few of the lobelian orchids in flower that I was mildly excited by the find. It is lovely thing and really very easy to grow in a rich damp loam in the garden. The Mediterranean form is botanically distinguished as Orchis morio sep. picta but I see little justification
Incidentally, for this piece of redundant splitting. While I have been talking about this orchid, I wonder how many have noticed the Romulea leaf and seed capsule in the photograph!

Anyway, west at first I found only this plant but soon I found another two this time different colour forms of the variable plant and thereafter I seemed to find nothing but hundreds of Orchis morio for some time. While Janette was faithfully photographing these two we had a rather extraordinary and disconcerting visitor. A strange little man came chattering along the path and clutching a cake of soap; he stopped suddenly on seeing Janette crouched over the double over the camera. A long and intricate discussion in French followed in the course of which he came to the conclusion that we were foreigners. The Germans and Americans he told us had come to spy on
him also. However, complimented I felt at being mistaken for a James Bond of the Coffsian magic, I had to vindicate myself and he eventually made the pronouncement that I was a "specialiste en fleurs." Oh, but he too was a "specialiste" he declared with solemnity. Although I never discovered exactly he specialised in, though the ground around his corrugated shack, which we saw later farther along the coast, harboured a vast and weird collection of rocks and cactus plants and various marine curios in the way of driftwood. Eventually, he seemed satisfied that our activities innocuous and ambled off to wash himself at a spring back along the path, but not without an occasional backward glance to make certain that we were not training a high power telephoto lens on his dwelling.

Further back from the sea, groves of bush grew thickly and a little grassy knoll produced a number of interesting looking but flowerless
and so nameless bulbs as well as some more
rather different looking Romulea corsa.
Among the Cistus bushes, clumps of a rather
strange plant were pushing up
scaly shoots of scarlet or orange wax.
It is an Urobanchus or Broomeale,
parasitic on the roots of the Cistus. It is one
of the most arresting plants I have seen
and it is a pity that we cannot attempt to
grow such species in our gardens. It contains
no green colouring matter whatever and
is entirely dependent on its host plant, the
Cistus bush, for its nourishment. Little success
has been met with in attempts to cultivate
parasitic species or even semi-parasites, like
the Reduculans and Castilleias; the only
possibility in this instance would be to
establish a mature Cistus bush and
sow seed of the Urobanchus around its
base and then forget about and hope that
one day you will be greeted by a sight
like this. This technique has worked with
Lathaea clandestina, a bright violet
Stoat, sown on willow roots but it
is very much of an uncertain shot in the
dark.

South of Calvi the Pointe de Revellata
stretches out into the sea in a low hump.

Down here at the base grow innumerable
brushes of Rosemary and in the rock crevice-pocket
filled with the droppings of hundreds of
generations rabbits, grows the lovely autumn
flowering Pencojum roseum. We dug many
of its little, pearly bulbs with their
delicate, thready leaves. This is the leeward
side at which we are looking. It is
comparatively green and grassy and here
in what the ecologist would call
a damp flush we dug a remarkable collection
of bulbs evident only by their leaves. Of one
was probably an Ammophila sp. another
a little Allium, yet another looked like the tiny
Hesperis porphyria. These three were all growing in close association with a Romula, and a Serapis amphi. The cropping stones embossed in the cropping wet clay. The other side of the Pointe de Revelata provides the most fantastic contrast to this grassy greeneness. Giant and fierce waves lash sheer diurnal crags relentlessly and upon the flat top the scene is the quintessence of barrenness. Every drop of moisture is sucked from the soil by the hungry wind from the north. The savage 'mistral', which blows down from the icy tops of the Alps in unchecked fury. The wind was so strong that in taking the photograph of this grim place, Sterette was blown off the rock on which she was standing by the sudden gusts of the gale. How anything could grow here at all, I do not know. Little, in fact, did except for a few wind-tortured shrubs but in the
rock crevices covered the woolly rosettes of Erygium cotonicum II wrapped up in a woolly coat against the bitter fury of the wind. Unfortunately the plants were not yet in flower but they vary in colour from palest of pinks and mauves to a good deeply coloured carmine form, which one can find distinguished in nurserymen's catalogues as variety sublunis. One often wonders how a plant from sea-level in the warm lands of the Mediterranean could prove hardy in Britain but now, having visited Erygium cotonicum in its home, this will no longer be a puzzle. The plant's only enemy in a British winter is wetness and a humid atmosphere. For this reason alone it is best grown in a greenhouse or covered with a pane of glass, if out of doors, to prevent setting off in winter.

After our chilling experience on the Pianta de Lascari a Levellata we sought a more
amenable collecting area the following day and took the road out of Calvi, turning off it up towards the Bonifato valley, backed the snow covered peaks of the Monte Cinto massif. Between the main road along the north coast and the sea are numerous rich clump meadows and here growing in great quantities was our acquaintance of the previous day, Dodecatheon cordifolium. Some very robust pure white one I collected a really robust pure white one, pure white that is but for a delicate green veining on the petals, which served to emphasise rather than detract from its purity. It was a really good orchid country and Serapias were just starting to push their flower spikes among the listerianthus. Here too grew quantities of the ubiquitous Jassel Hysanthus, Muscaria cornutum, it is a very common plant of the Mediterranean and in general not one that we want to introduce into our gardens, where it is apt to increase at an alarming
rate and become a menace instead of a welcome guest. It is nevertheless quite an attractive plant whose chief merit is the becom- ing tassel of bright violet sterile flowers at the apex of the flower spike of greenish-brown fertile blooms. It is just as well that I did not want to collect many of it as the large pink-to-skinned bulbs grow alarmingly deeply in the stiff clay and the white roots hold on to the soil tenaciously. It is I think the most difficult bulb to extirpate which I have come across, so you can imagine how difficult it is to remove it from one's garden should it ever be necessary.

A delightful little d aberrate grew occasionally in the short turf of these pastures. It is Salvia clandestina, though there is nothing very clandestine about its display of pure sky-blue flowers. It is a very pleasing little member of a genus which has produced so many good plants but which is sadly neglected by rock gardeners. The reason is inexplicable as t
some of the Salvias are among the finest
colourful and easy dwarf species. The grow
the taller species in herbaceous borders and
plant solid beds of the glaring scarlet Salvia
splendens but no one puts the dwarf, hardy
ones in their rock garden.

From the level meadows of the coast line
we turned inland toward the Mountains, bleak
and snow-capped in April. I found Orchis
papilionacea, shrivelled by the unusual drought of
last spring and aodd somewhat sad looking
spike of the Monkey Orchid, Orchis simia caught
my eye in the Cistus bushes. While investigating
this I saw a great mass of white daisies
growing farther down the bank. What impelled
me to go down and have a closer look I shall
never know, but it resulted in the discovery
of one of the most lovely of the Corsican Bulbs.

Among the daisies, indistinguishable from a distance
account its similar colour, and all down a
grassy slope, hidden by surrounding Cistus bushes,
was *Crinum bulbocodium*. It is found only in Corsica and on a little of the neighbouring Italian mainland, but is nowhere common. It always grows in colonies which may consist of thousands of bulbs but are few and far between. The large white flowers like huge upturned snowdrops sit very close to the ground and the outer segments are exquisitely pencilled with fine grey-green lines on the reverse side. Only a couple of broad green leaves are produced from each of the bulbs, which were growing in damp clay among innumerable lumps of granite. I set about digging a number of the little bulbs and looked up at the high-pitched howl of a motor-bike to see a gendarme humming along the road above us. He almost fell lost his balance in twisting his neck to watch us but soon disappeared round the corner; a few moments later another gendarme hummed along the road; there was then a short pause.
I continued digging ditches; then the hum of light-weight motor-bikes again, and this time the two gendarmes came back along the road to investigate. They clambered down the grassy slope and the elder and superior, doing his utmost to look like a uniformed Inspector Maigret, greeted us with 'Bojour, monsieur dame.' The inevitable handshakings preceded a long interrogation which involved meticulous examination of passports and the writing of copious notes in a tiny, dog-eared notebook. As a result the Corsican police now possess a detailed record of such odd facts as my mother maiden name and where she was born. I am sorry to say that much of it is fictitious as I have atrociously bad memory for birthdays and dates. I wanted to avoid further complications, I translated everyone's name into French so that Janetti I have forgotten called Guillaume and Jacques. The genius of one of the two gendarmes regarded our activities less gravely and was soon handing round Cossican cigarettes and general...
generally entering into the spirit of things by informing me that my treasured Crithitgalum was only 'all savagery' and the myrtle which he proceed to dance off and gather, was much more interesting. Eventually, however, the two policemen went off with their petting comfortably on the fat, leather holsters at their sides. Once again, I felt like James Bond although Janet was rather perturbed and was considerably relieved that we would be leaving Calvi the following day. Regardless of such incidents, we had to carry on with our work and dig some more of the Crithitgalums. On the larger slabs of granite, a little Sedum grew. Its rosettes were of a translucent crimson and it grew in shallow pockets sometimes only a fraction of an inch deep, on the large rocks. It is Sedum coburnii, which flowers in August and September, with delicate sprays of tiny pale blue flowers, and is one of the very few annuals which are not only perennial...
but desirable in the rock garden.

The next morning at ten minute to six we arrived promptly at Calvi's tiny railway station to catch the first train to Bastia across the island on the East coast. From Calvi the fast little diesel train steamed at an average of seventy m.p.h. along a very narrow gauge track, which climbed up and across the mountainous interior of the island. The day before we had had a look at the track along the beach from the town and had wondered how any train could run along the sand-covered, rocky rails on the loose, warped sleepers but run they did and with a vengeance on their clacking passengers.

The interior of Corsica is very mountainous. You may, up till now, have had the wrong impression of Corsica from my account. As it was early in the year we restricted our
Corsica is almost wholly mountainous, rising up to the great peaks, like the highest, Monte Cinto, of 8,900 ft. in altitude. The mountains are the homes of many fine alpines but in spring they are still snow-covered and the end of May and June are the times when to visit them. This was, however, the sort of country that the railway wound through: past snowy peaks and mountain-streams, over bridges and through long tunnels. As with almost every Corsican journey, our train-side was not without incident. As we lurched through one such long dark tunnel, there was a sudden screaming hiss of the powerful air brakes and a most sickening and muffled thud, followed by a jolted violently forward. We had a cow still asleep in the depth of the tunnel. The ill-fated animal had obviously not realized that they had broken outside and had slept on in
ignorant bliss. Before I even realised what had happened, almost every occupant had either jumped down on to the line or was hanging out of a carriage window to witness the no doubt mangled and bloody carcase being dragged off the line. Knowing, the trench should not have been surprised if they had returned to the carriage clutching piles of the best fillet steaks.

The train soon continued on its way across to Bastia past some Corsica’s highest mountains. This one is Monte d’Oro, the second highest peak in the island. It is called the golden mountain, I believe, because the rocks around the summit are covered in summer with a growth of deep-yellow lichen which glints golden in the setting sun. The forests around its base are of the tall, straight Cossican pine, Pinus laricio. The photograph of the mountains were by the way, taken from the carriage window and in the course of our
three hour journey to Bastia.

Bastia is the largest town in Corsica and an uninteresting manufacturing centre. In two
dozen days there, we took the bus service north, in the direction of Cap Corse, to the
village of Pietracorsa and made our way on
foot into the hills to the tiny hill village
of Acqualta. By the roadside, on the shady
banks grew thousands of anemone
shortnesses luxuriating in the cool conditions,
and pure leaf mould. It is difficult to
envision this as one of the parents of the
large and flower-like anemones. But this
it certainly is. The lovely delicate flowers
provided quite a kaleidoscope of colours
as they waved among the tall grasses: from pale
silvery blue and mauves through pinks to quite
dark and exciting magentas, which were made
more splendid by the emphatic black
roses in the centre. Tossed with the scarlet
Anemone coronaria from the Eastern Mediterranean.
it gave us, and I said, our race of florists
Anemones but somehow I should prefer to grow this delicate, fragile wildling
even if we were only to remind me of these
Corsican woodlands where it sways and quivers with the grasses at every touch of the
wind. When you have Anemones growing
like this, it is very easy to realise how
got their name of Windflowers; but
this pleasant habit means nothing but
trouble for the plant photographer and
I had dug dozens of the tubers before
Janette finally secured this portrait of the
incessantly moving plant. Higher up in
this area I collected a variety of worthwhile
species from the great turnip-like tubers of
Cyclamen neapolitanum to the two
beautiful orchids, Orchis papilionacea
and Orchis provincialis but little was in
flower and the plants showed sad signs
of suffering the unusual drought which had
marked the previous winter and early spring. On our last day in Bastia, we travelled farther up the eastern side of Cap Corse to Erbalunga, a small and very picturesque village. It was a Sunday and the weather was hot. Jannette caused something of a sensation for the Sunday afternoon trip from Bastia, by photographing a plant by the roadside. There was a very sharp bend on the road just beyond this point and I fear that on several successive occasions our activities were very nearly the cause of what would have been a most spectacular car accident! This is the plant I had found, Lphilys sphaegodes, the Early Spider Orchid. The Lphilys species are perhaps the most fascinating of terrestrial orchids and unfortunately, as we do not have the equipment for macro-photography, I cannot let you see on the screen the fantastic intricacy of the little flowers. Many of my subscribers had requested members of this
genus but I only found the odd tuber here and there and this was the only one we found in flower. Early May is really the best time to look for these plants in the Mediterranean. I found one or two more plants among the grebs not in flower so I left this one in the hope that it might propagate itself by seeding. Over the wall in what had once been a terraced field, we dug a number of Cypripedium corms just pushing up through the hard clay. They were almost definitely G. byzantinus, quite a common plant of the Mediterranean. Apart from these we did not collect much that day and I admit we were more than a little lazy; perhaps it was the long trek we had had up from Esbalunga; perhaps it was the relaxing warmth of the scorching sun or maybe the holiday atmosphere of the passing car loads of French driving up to
sundetide in the secluded beaches of Cap Corse; perhaps it was for all three reasons that we too had a Holiday that day and lay in the grass on a rocky Hillside, writing up our respective note-books, which a duty which is all too often sadly neglected. When the sun's warmth lessened we gathered up our rucksacks and made our way down to the village II, which by now lay relaxed and dazed in the late afternoon sun, to catch the bus returning to Bastia. On arriving, we found that we had just missed a bus and so I eased my conscience by spending the next hour collecting Serapis lingua and a variety of ferns from the Hillside behind Erbalunga. All too soon we were bound southward for Bastia which by then lay, its lights twinkling, in a dusky blue mist beneath the salmon sky of the setting sun. It is now time for us to leave Corsica, the
little scented island of the Mediterranean, but I know that sometime I must return to discover the secrets of that lovely, romantic valley on La Plante and to sample the summer delights of the high mountains. How little of Corsica we really know; how few of its plants we had seen; how few of its people we had met.

At the beginning of this journey I called Corsica an 'enchanted island,' but in reality it is the 'enchanted conductor,' and it weaves a wonderful spell about those who try to discover it. I hope that I have been able to reveal just the tiniest thread of this spell to you all tonight, that you may want to. Thank you everyone for joining me on this spiritual little trip, and for showing yourselves to be such good travelling companions.