

LORD CHESTERFIELD

VAGABONDIA

Between Zu and Ni and
Amar to Bat

By BRUNO LESSING

SAN SEBASTIAN.—“*Da dum diddy dum clack-clack da dum dee, clack, dum dee, clack, dum diddy um, clack, clack.*”

That, gentle reader, is the nearest I can come to describing how my Spanish complex is working. I'm singing *La Paloma* and clacking a pair of castanets. Also drinking a glass of sherry. The friends with whom I am sitting are begging me to cut out the singing and put the castanets away. But what would you? In Spain one must do as the Spaniards do.

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YET this region is not the true, unadulterated Spanish Spain. It is the land of the Basques, who, while they are as Spanish at heart as any Spaniard, are an entirely different people. They are probably the oldest people in all Europe and yet their origin is unknown.

They call their language “*Euzkera*,” which, they tell you, means “clearly speaking,” although they probably do not know the origin of the word themselves. And they call themselves “*Euzkaldunak*,” which really means “those who speak the ‘*Euzkera*’ language.”

They have been described as a superstitious people, conservative, irascible, ardent, proud, serious in their religious life and pure in their moral conduct. To which I can add that they also make the most powerful apple brandy I have ever tasted.

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I HAVE started in to study the Basque language. Had my first lesson today. Not being a dog in the manger, I hasten to broadcast what I learned. The words for I, you and we are *ni, zu and gu*. A horse is *zaldia*. And the numbers, from one to ten, are *bat, bi, iru, lau, bozt, sei, zazpi, zortzi, beratz* and *amar*. With the exception of the word *sei* for six—which is the same in Italian—no one has ever found any connection between this language and any other. There is no word for 1,000, which probably helps to keep the Basques honest.

I don't know how to say “I love you” and, what's more, I don't want to know. The girls look awfully pretty but the men look sort of fierce. Anyway, between *zu* and *ni*, I don't think *ni* will take any more lessons. And it's *amar to bat* that in a few days *ni* will forget every word. But don't be surprised if, some day, *zu* hear *ni* bragging about the days when *ni* spoke Basque.

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SAN SEBASTIAN is the biggest town in this Basque province, but is not very Basque-y. Its situation between the mountains and the sea has made it the most popular resort in Spain and it is even attracting visitors from all parts of the world. During the monarchy it was the Summer capital. As a result there has for years been an influx of outside influences which have made the place rather cosmopolitan.

The Basques are anything but cosmopolitan. Occasionally some of them drift in here in native costume and give native dances. But if you want to see the real Basque life with all its vivid color you easily find it in hundreds of communities around here.

* * *

I WONDER if I can bring a smile to the face of a lady who has had much affliction. I was here when the late Alex Moore was American Ambassador. The late Dwight Morrow had a Summer cottage near Hendaye, across the border, about ten miles away. He and Moore were great friends.

One day the Ambassador gave a party in honor of Maria Christina, the mother of King Alfonso, and there was a big gathering. I met Mrs. Morrow and her children and we walked about the spacious grounds. I happened to remark that the place was just groggy with royalty and titled folk and Mrs. Morrow said that her children were dying to meet a real, live prince.

Just then along came Prince Habib Lotfallah, an Egyptian whom everyone in Europe knows and who knows everyone everywhere. I called him over and introduced him. I shall never forget the expression on little Anne's face.

With her finger in her mouth she gazed at the young Egyptian, her first prince, like the sailors of Cortez when they first beheld the Pacific, “with a wild surmise.” I wonder if she remembers it.

* * *

THIS place has rather sad memories for me. I met many people here to whom I became attached. And now they are gone. But far be it from me to become sentimental. I'm going to look up that Basque apple brandy.

(Tomorrow: The world's strangest club.)

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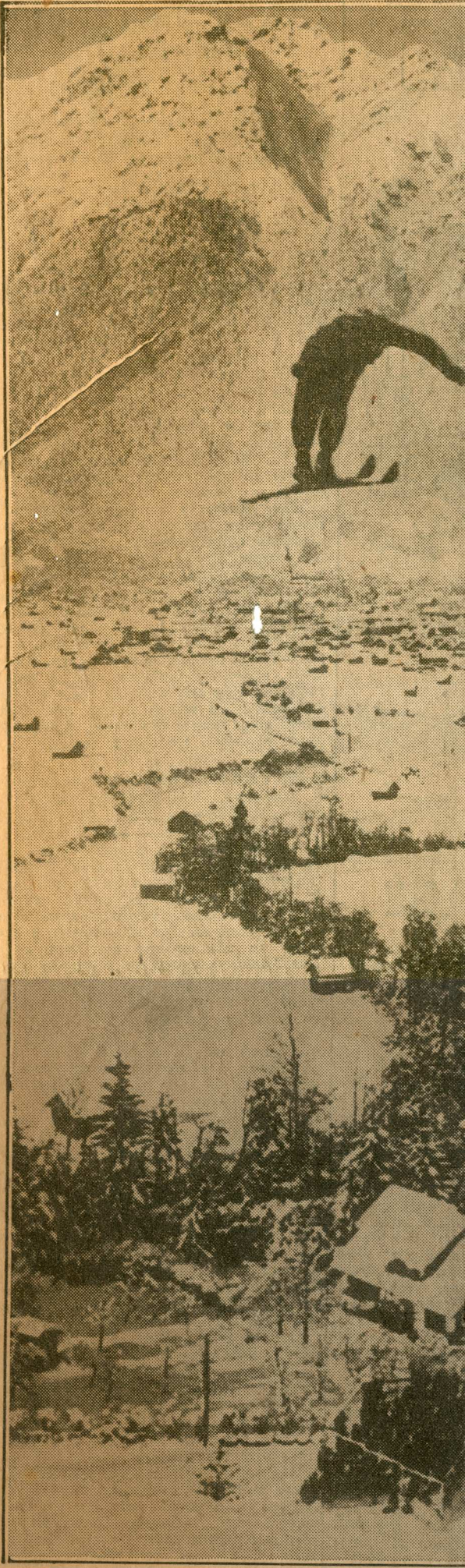


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The News in

State Police R



REAL BIRDMAN—H. Sorensen, European ski jumper extraordinary, in a re-

DEAD IN WRECK

An unusual wreck at Layden, Ontario, the other day involved three locomotives. One engineer was killed and another trainman seriously injured.

The smashup was only eight miles from the disastrous Christmas night crash in which fifteen persons were killed and thirty injured.

Note how the three locomotives in the picture on the right have piled into each other. They are "out on their feet."

