

row of a debauch, and stung with a bitter regret, to think that life is not indeed so beautiful. But until then his poem belongs only to himself, his unfinished poem, and for that reason so much the more dear to him; for as he gazes across the plan of it, he can see it still as it should be in the ideal. What can he be doing at this hour, the young poet? Has he already laid himself down to read far into the night, and placed upon the little stand beside his bed of straps a favourite book, a hundred times re-read, and wherein, for his strong and fresh imagination, worlds open between the lines, horizons that have no end? Nay, rather, he has laboured all the evening, he has written some of his finest strophes; then at last, worn out by the effort, he has fallen back into his great armchair, his charming boy's head has sunk upon his shoulder, his eyes are closed, the pen has dropped from his fingers; yet ever in his slumber he looks upon the page that he has begun, and dreams that the Muse, all satisfied with him—the Muse who still lives for him, like a mother who should be an angel—is leaning now at the back of the chair looking at him in his sleep with smiling lips, and ever and anon draws the light fingers of one of her hands through his locks, and kisses him lingeringly on the brow.

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"Who can it be that lives there?" asks Ludovic, ever drawn on by the mysterious fascination of the lighted window, while his fancy roams at will.

Lovers! Yes, lovers, for whom in all the world there is nothing but their own mutual, infinite loving, and whose eyes have sight for nothing further than the two woven shadows, that stray before them in the moonlight. Oh! the young and charming couple. That human idyll of theirs had its all happy commencement one evening at the end of the suburbs, when, chance placing them side by side, they were watching the rotation of the wooden horses in the show; but instantly she saw that he was fair, he, the student, fair with lips of vermeil; and he too surrendered himself at a glance to this dark beauty with the eyes that were joyous as a song; and they asked no permission to be happy save that of their twenty years. This has been since the spring-time, since the month of flowers, of cherries, and of virgin youths; but they are at the age when to-morrow means forever, and they have turned their attic chamber into a dove-cot of kisses.

'Tis strange that there should be any light with them this evening; usually—for love is fond of long nights—they go to bed early and rise late. The lover is doubtless obliged to be away from home to-day; he has had to go to dinner with his aged parents; but, on his departure, she tied one of her handkerchiefs around his neck in order that, while he is gone, he may breathe its fragrance and not forget her. Afterwards, as she made her little dinner at the corner of the table, she felt happy to be alone, for she could the better think of him; she traced dreamily, without making the letters clear, the name of her beloved upon the table cloth with the point of her knife; she recalled, with a tender smile, the beautiful way in which he walks, how prettily he acts, and she felt a sense of something very delicious widening in her heart. But at last she has unrobed herself and gone to bed. At this moment she is asleep beside the lighted candle, her fresh face, drowned in her loosened hair, is resting upon her two clasped hands, and the neck of her delicate muslin night-dress has slipped away along her arm and laid bare her round clear shoulder. When he shall enter very soon, careful not to make a noise, he shall have the delight of surprising her in her flower-sleep; he will seat himself beside the bed and gaze long at her. Then, divining him instinctively in her dreams, she will open her eyes. Oh! the beating eye-lashes of an awakening girl of twenty years! Oh! the first glimmerings of a star—mad with love, he will seize her, will clasp her passionately, and bury his face in her perfumed bosom.

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"Who can it be that dwells there?" dreams Ludovic, his eyes ever fixed upon the lofty window that shines into the night. Why not some good family with children? An autumn with fair fruit? After all, the world is not destitute of such meek and resigned hearts, happy in duty and by duty, like the married couple whom Ludovic meets now and then in the suburb on Sundays in patriarchal fashion: the mamma, a faded blonde, with a cheap make-up, pushing her last-born before her in a little carriage, and the father, a grey-headed sub-chief who expects the cross, full of pride as he gives his hand to his help-mate. It is they, perhaps, who have their home up there, and as they have a salary of four hundred and odd francs a month to live upon—ah! think then, with two children—they must often breakfast upon the fragments of cold veal left over from the night before, and the collegian sleeps in the dining room upon a sofa-bed spread for him every evening. Ah! that little last-born, whom they never expected, the little love, but who was very welcome all the same, has sadly disordered their slender finances. How fortunate that papa has found a book-keeper's position in a druggist's shop which brings him in six hundred francs a year, and which compels him to go abroad at eight o'clock in the morning, to be away all day, carrying his breakfast with him in his napkin. Ah! well, they never complain; every one is in good health. Leon, their eldest, who makes his fifth, has won three prizes in the last year, and it is touching, the affectionate look which the husband turns toward his wife when he sees her wearing her eyes out over her sewing in the evenings, and says to her: "Come, mamma, go to bed . . . you have done enough for to-day." But why does he not do the same, he, the father, who must be up to-morrow morning early and at work upon the great ledger book in his druggist's shop? Why does he linger still beside the petroleum lamp? Ah; it is because he has discovered that, in the course of his studies, Leon cannot do without a tutor, and it is for that reason that he is labouring to revive his old Greek, the poor kind soul, digging up the buried memories of his Burnulf, and entangling himself with rough breathings, duals and aorists. . . .

Bah! in spite of all their troubles, Ludovic envies them, envies even these simple people, because they possess what he cannot earn with all the life's blood in his veins: a noble sentiment, and eat their thin homely fare girded round with goodness.

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Suddenly great drops of rain come splashing down upon the pavement and upon the brew-house table at which Ludovic is lounging. 'Tis the storm, and he must get in-doors.

In spite of the late hour, he finds his door-keeper still awake and on her settee, mending at a woollen stocking. Ha! he will find out who it is that is awake behind that shining curtain in front of which he has been so dolefully dreaming this evening of all earthly blessings, those at least which are at the command of the poor: labour, love, and domestic peace.

"Who is the lodger above me?" he asks of the old woman. "Yes, in the room just over mine. It is the only window yet alight in the house."

"Alas! sir," answers the door-keeper, "no one lives there any longer. . . . It was held by a miserable old man, who owed two terms of his rent. . . . The landlord never demanded them of him, for charity's sake. . . . for he was nearly seventy years old, and was about to enter at Bicêtre. . . . But he is dead now, poor fellow, dead just at the stroke of four. . . . Then the lady who has the first story has given an old cloth to bury him in, since he did not know any one. . . . Ah! God, no, not one friend or parent to watch by him. . . . I have lighted a candle by his bed, and as I see that all the lodgers are now in-doors, I am going up there for an hour to say my beads over for his service."

THE EXPERIENCES OF SAN PANCRAZIO OF EVOLO.

From the German of A. Schneegans.

"Down with him! Into the sea with the obstinate old wretch! He'll come to his senses again down among the cuttle-fish and cray-fish! Now he feels the water! He's swimming! He's going down! Now Evoluccio, now I hope you'll feel comfortable down there in the cool depths of the sea!"

He who, in the midst of the noisy crowd, upon the highest point of the precipitous headland of Evolo, which overlooks the sea, thus shouted and raged was the little broad-shouldered ship-broker Cesare Agresta, and those who, with wild cries and still wilder gestures, surged to and fro upon the cliff, around the little old chapel, amid the gnarled olive trees, were his fellow citizens of both sexes. The whole population of the little Sicilian town of Roccastretta, men, and women, greybeards and little children, rich and poor—including even the Right Reverend Padre Atanasio, and the no less Right Honourable Don Sindaco, both of whom standing a few paces aside—watched, with a peculiar expression of malicious pleasure, the proceedings of the noisy and highly excited crowd.

About the stem of an old olive tree a number of stout, half-naked fellows had fastened a thick rope, which hung down over the cliff into the sea beneath, and which, from time to time, with its sudden and irregular jerks as if it bore, suspended to it, a heavy and resisting body, made the stout old tree bend to its highest branches and threatened to tear it up from its deepest roots. Don Cesare directed the operations of the roaring, surging crowd; he ran hither and thither as fast as his little, fat legs allowed him; he shouted, he gesticulated, he ordered about, he swore, he laughed, he blustered, and every one obeyed his commands, and gave heed to his every gesture.

"Why little Don Cesare is so particularly zealous in this matter I cannot for the life of me understand," remarked the portly Padre Atanasio in a low voice to his neighbour, Don Sindaco.

"Old Evolino, or as they now styled him, contemptuously, Evoluccio, has never done him a bad turn, at any time, and it's all one to him whether it rains or not; for he does not possess a single rood of land; nor has he a single lemon tree which he can call his own."

Don Sindaco shrugged his shoulders like one who knew no more about it than did Padre Atanasio, and answered significantly, with a slight nod of the head in the direction of a young couple who, half concealed by the old chapel, appeared to be engaged in an animated conversation.

While Don Cesare busied himself with the old fellow, his lively little sister, the pretty Carmela, busied herself with the young ones.

"I have noticed for some time past that something was going on between these two," answered the good father with a side glance, in which was visible something like resignation struggling against a very different emotion. . . . "But what can possibly come of it? . . ."

"The wealthy Nino will never be satisfied with a shipbroker's sister. . . . He'll look higher than that."

"No, Padre Atanasio, one is not always wont to look for equality of condition when they marry," answered the other, as, winking his eye, he smiled roguishly upon the burly father.

"I am quite aware of that," replied the latter, without in any way taking offence at the bantering tone in which the other spoke.

"But if Don Cesare perceives what Master Nino is about, he is likely to be pretty handy with his knife, I can tell you."

"That is Nino's lookout," laughed Don Sindaco. "Between my neighbour's door and the hinge I'll be careful not to put my finger."

They were interrupted by the crowd rolling back tumultuously from the cliff towards where they were standing.

"That sight has gladdened your eyes, Padre Atanasio," shouted one from among the throng, a thin, haggard sailor, looking like a bandit under