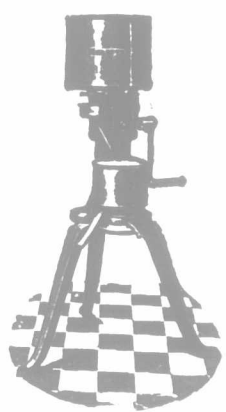


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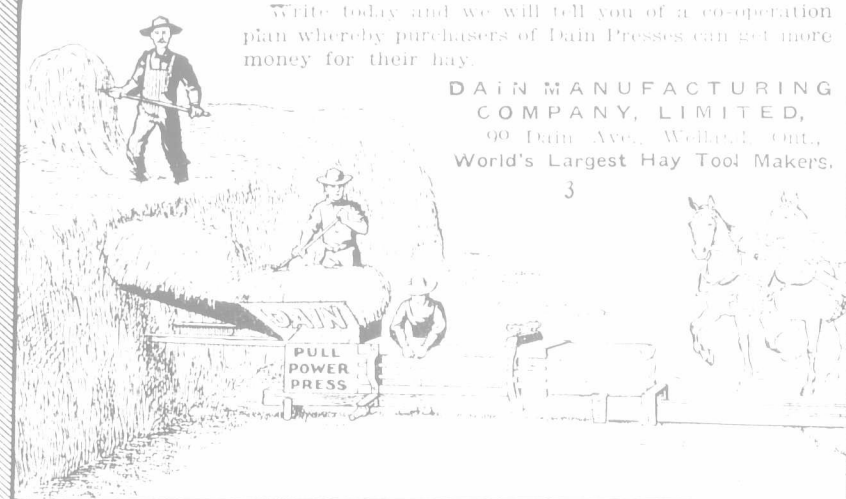
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3



The Summit of the Mountain.

By Jean Rameau.

A native of Navarreux, not far from the summit of the mountain of Annie, Cazambon had only one dream of bliss; to die near the summit in a house of his own. To realize this dream, he worked in Paris from morning to night, and sometimes from night to morning, copying anything and everything, accounts, plays or novels, since his star had made him a copyist. What a star to have been born under! By copying fourteen or fifteen hours a day, he earned three hundred francs a month, enough to keep his wife and son Andre from dying of hunger. Under such conditions, where did he find the hope of becoming the owner of a house with a view of the summit of Annie?

Every four or five years, if the times had been prosperous, he would indulge in a week's vacation; take a walking trip to Navarreux, and ask the price of every house with a view of Annie! What exorbitant price they wanted! Ten thousand, twenty, even fifty thousand francs, is what they demanded for any house where Annie could be seen with its snow-capped summit, like a cathedral, against the blue sky.

But one day he found a little farmhouse on a mountain stream for which they wanted only three thousand francs. The summit of Annie could be seen distinctly about ten miles away, rising majestically above the other mountains, and Cazambon's eyes sparkled at the view.

"Three thousand francs is not exorbitant," he said to the owner. "I will return. This is my address. Do not sell without warning me." He left a printed card. Then he waved his hand to the summit of Annie. "I will see you again, my beauty," he cried, and trudged away.

Yes, he certainly had the hope of again seeing that white-capped mountain which was the earliest memory of his childhood. Three thousand francs? Well, he could save it in ten years, if business was good, and what are ten years in a strong man's life?

Cazambon returned to work with enthusiasm. How many manuscripts he copied! How his pen flew! But he saw only that beloved mountain smiling on him as a reward for thirty years of hard work. When his hand had a cramp, he would stop writing and draw pictures of the view from the little farm. "It is the view from our house in Navarreux, the most beautiful view in the world. You must come and visit us—some day," he said to his friends.

He would copy sometimes until three in the morning, and the next day his eyes would be very tired, so tired that he could hardly see the end of the Rue des Martyrs.

One day he went to spend a few hours at Saint Cloud.

"Papa, see how pretty the Eiffel Tower looks from here," said his son Andre.

"What? You can see the Eiffel Tower?"

"Why, yes, plainly."

Cazambon could not see it, and a great fear entered his soul. Was he becoming blind? Had he worked too hard to see the summit of Annie? Perhaps he could not see it when he had saved the three thousand francs.

And now Cazambon has the three thousand francs, but he thinks of the fact without enthusiasm, for he is blind.

"But we will buy the farm, just the same," he says, as the tears come to his dead eyes. "You can see it, my son, if I cannot."

The son is a man now, and it is he who copies and earns the three hundred francs a month necessary for the family support. And although he finds his father's hobby very useless and expensive, he goes by the first excursion train to buy the farm. But the farm is not for sale. The old owner is dead, and it has been bought, like everything in the neighborhood, by one of the wealthy Parisians, as a summer home. And the prices of everything in the place have soared to impossible figures. The best Andre can buy is a little hut, in a hole without space or view, but as his father cannot see and will not know

As soon as he had provided a little necessary furniture, he brought the poor

old man, and the blind face beamed with joy to think that the summit of Annie was there before him, with its white peak against the blue sky.

"How beautiful it is!" he said as he held his son's hand and pointed to the imaginary spot.

"Yes, it is very beautiful," Andre replied in a tender voice.

"Is there still snow on the mountains near it?"

"Yes, dazzling snow."

"And are the houses of Navarreux visible?"

"Yes."

"And the chasm at the right?"

"There is a white cloud in it."

"And are the pine trees still there?"

"Oh, yes."

"What a view!" said the blind old man. "The most beautiful view in the world."

Then, one day, Andre, who had returned to Paris to continue his work, received a letter from his father.

"Dear Andre: A great surprise. My cousin, the doctor from Pau, has examined my eyes, and assures me he can cure them. Come quickly. They are waiting for you, before performing the operation."

Young Cazambon was happy to read the letter, but his happiness was tinged with melancholy. He thought: "What will he say if he regains his sight and discovers that I have deceived him? Poor father! When he does not see his summit of Annie from the window!"

If Andre had had the money, how quickly he would have bought that farm at any price, but copying was so badly paid since the invention of the typewriter. Nevertheless, Andre must go to be present at the operation.

It was performed. It seemed to have succeeded.

Oh! The joy of the old man in whom there was so little strength left.

"Take me to the window. Oh, take me to the window!" he said, the moment he could be moved.

His son was crying.

"Father," he murmured, "I must tell you—"

But he did not finish. At the window, the dim eyes of his father shone with an expression of ecstasy.

"Oh, how beautiful!" he sighed in a trembling voice.

Much astonished, Andre looked. And he saw above the trees a white cloud with pointed peaks, that looked like a mountain against the blue sky.

"How happy I am to see again!" said the feeble old man, as two tears fell from his clouded eyes.

And his emotion was so strong that his eyes closed and he fell gently into his son's arms, as his heart stopped beating forever, without a doubt of the illusion.

Far away, the white cloud arose with a more and more imposing majesty and radiance, as it carried a human soul to the summit of the mountain.—Translated from the French by Annette Herod.

The Snowbird.

He sits in winter's sleet and the snow is round his feet.

But he cares not for the cold; For his little cheerful heart thinks the snow as fair a part

As the summer's green and gold.

On the branches bare and brown, with their crystals for a crown,

Sits the tiny winter bird;

In the dark and stormy days lightening the lonely ways

With his constant cheery word.

To his mission he is true; God has work for him to do—

With his happy song to cheer;

In his sweet life's simple speech lessons high and glad to teach

In the dark days of the year.

Oh, his little heart is strong, and he never thinks it wrong

That to him this lot is given;

Never envies birds that sing in the summer or the spring

Underneath a sunny heaven.

"Wouldst thou choose thy time or way?" seems the bothersome tune to say—

"God hath ordered these for thee;

Where thy life can praise Him best He hath set thee, only rest

And his purpose thou shalt see."

—Carl Spencer, in Boston Sunday Herald.