

HOME LIFE IN MALTA.

EVERY FAMILY HAS ITS LITTLE OPEN COURT.

It May be Very Small, but Its Indispensable—Not a Poorly Built Home on the Island, and They are All Marvellously Clean—Courtship and Marriage.

Looking back from within the environment of the fisher folk of the Adriatic, and even with all the fair domes and minarets of Venice in view across the opaline waters of the flashing lagoons, the peasantry of Malta are, to my eyes, set in a fair and sunny perspective.

They are thrifty and virtuous; loyal and loving; kindly and pious; patient and good.

Nine tenths of all the cultivated lands in Malta have been made by actually breaking up with pickaxes the surface of the rock to the depth of nearly two feet, leveling it, and piling upon this mass the same stone reduced to powder, as it is very soft and easily pulverized, mixed with layers of pumice and everything in the nature of soil which has for a long time been scraped together and treasured against this most important of all times with the peasant tenant. To thus reclaim and make available another half, or fourth, or a tenth of an acre is the proudest act of the Maltese peasant's life.

He has less pride in his wife, his children or his animals. They have a wise and serious way of blessing the dead along these patriotic lines. I heard it at Dingli, where, after mass the peasants were berating the memory of a mean and miserly fellow but recently deceased. They said very unpleasant things about him, until one who had not previously spoken set the current the other way in a perfect torrent of praise by the single remark: "But Luigi gava Malta another tumolo (about one-third of an acre) of land!"

No peasant farmer owns his own land. A nobility grew up under the regime of the Knights which exists to this day.

Holdings are nearly all under short, generally eight-year leases; but there are a number of 90 and 100 years leases, giving a virtual ownership. These tiny Maltese farms are very small. A few comprise as many as five salmas, or about twenty-one acres. The most are from one to three salmas. And I know of many with no more than three mondelli or less than an eighth of an acre land in each. The rentals for these, with all repairs and improvements at the cost of the peasant tenant, range from \$5 to \$20 per acre.

If the peasants' holding is little and picturesque in its grouping of craggy terraces, his home and belongings are indeed snug and picturesque. There is not a squalid, poorly built rustic's abode upon the island. If it be scarcely larger than a sentry box, the walls will be of stone, which is so soft he can chop it out of the ledges with an axe, after which it hardens by exposure. I have seen some roofs of solid rock in thick flat slabs, but most are plastered with pozzolana, and all are huge and flat.

These structures are usually very low, occasionally two low stories, but often one, and always after the Moorish style of extending tower, or at least three, sides around the open court. This is invariable, however diminutive may be the home. I have often seen them so small that members of the same family could almost join hands across the open court, but the court was there, with the open sky and its healthful vertical light with the sunshine and the birds; and, better than all, that sense of snugness and neatness between every member of such a household and every other, and the feeling of accessibility and even companionship which draws close remotest household outcrochings and belongings, such as the tiers of little boxes in which we Americans live can never give.

As everything else yields to the exigencies of terracing the little patches of hillside artificial soil, one will find these sunny and lightsome abodes in all manner of odd situations. Every piece of made ground is diked and walled so as to prevent a "washout" and also to protect from the southern sirocco of summer and the bitter gale of winter, and the little farm will sometimes be found for a distance of a few miles rising in what appears to be a series of cypolecan ragged stone steps, without a house being visible, or so built into the dike-walls that their flat roofs blend into the general perspective of furrowed rock. But you know that you can find them, scores of them, in any short distance. Some of them are really covered excavations in the corners of these tiny fields. Still others project into roads, which wind tortuously about them; and I have frequently become completely bewildered in the maze of narrow thoroughfares thus necessitated, within a mile's radius.

Though such extraordinary pains and labor are experienced to protect the land against the ravages of the occasional winter down-pours of rain, equal care and provisions are required to preserve the water, so precious in the long and burning summer months. Every steading is provided with immense tanks or cisterns cut in the solid rock. Tiny springs are frequent, and not a drop from these is allowed to go to waste. Where the spring happens to be located conveniently, little stone troughs are laid so as to irrigate, at pleasure, every square foot of soil, and every particle of the overflow is conducted by other tiny troughs to the cisterns. Spouts lead from the dike walls and the flat roofs, and from every other possible projection or level, until the entire island is a network of rude appliances for complete irrigation.

But the results are wonderful. Two and often three crops are raised every year, and from May until October when the untiled surface of the island is as white as bakers oven and quivering with heat, within these pleasant homes and these walled fields, where the outward aspect is so hard and forbidding, there are endless wimplings of water, marvelous upleaping of vegetables, fruit and grain, and the matchless melodies of birds.

All these Maltese farm homes are very interesting and many are unique and picturesque. They are all meticulously clean, and are given unusual freshness by the constant applications by the housewives of a preparation of the pumiced stone, of a pale cream color, of the consist-

ency of whitewash, to the stone floors, walls and ceilings. The granary, pens for animals and housing for fowls are all a part of the abode, usually, at convenience, in the first story, the family sleeping in the apartments above; but such extraordinary care is universal among the peasant farmers, that every such apartment I ever changed to enter was at least as sweet and cleanly as a gentleman's boudoir.

Many of the walls leading from the rear of the court are covered with mosses and vines. Often the old Moorish *nora* or water-wheel stands silently or creaks dismally near the abode. Here and there near the home will be found the ancient tread mill of the Bible times on which all the wheat and barley of the island is trod out by oxen or cows. Against the walls will hang tremendous gourds, quaint old farming implements, or high sieves with rawhide instead of wire screens, as all the grain is removed from the chaff in this primitive way.

Owing to the scarcity of wood upon the island hardly a wooden implement or article of furniture can be seen. Settles of stone are common. In many farmhouses I found stone slabs utilized as tables, and in others the same set securely into the walls of rooms for bunks or beds. Window-panes are few, as the light from the sky through the open courts, and the tiny and infrequent windows a foot square are all sufficient.

Perhaps the most curious objects to be found in these Maltese peasant homes is what may be termed their stoves. The Maltese literally have no firesides. They require no artificial heat, and all their cooking—which is restricted to bread made of wheat and barley meal something of the consistency of a Scotch "bannock," fish which is plentiful and cheap, and certain vegetable stews in which are stirred scant shreds of cured fish or scantly bits of bacon for seasoning—is done upon a portable stone stove shaped like a jar, and resembling in everything but color a tinner's ordinary hand furnace in which his soldering irons are heated. Most of these are of home construction, cut out of any handy block of stone, with rude handles carved near the top; but some are of delft ware and more capacious and shapely. They can be carried about and the housewife can mind her cooking, if she likes, while at any drudgery of the house or fields.

The home and neighborhood life of these folk is not as colorful as that of the Italian and Spanish peasantry. They are docile, calm, contented, ambitious only to thrive, and with a burning desire amounting often to a passion to be better tenants than their predecessors. They rise and go to bed with the sun. If belated at night no friendly evening candle light will guide the wanderer to a fireside.

The music of the guitar and mandolin alone would disclose the presence of this half Arab home. For a little time after the night has fallen and the stars shine out the husbandman may sit and croon his weird strange chants. The wife sits by him with folded hands and closed eyes, occasionally venturing a minor note. The lads and the lassies thrum the stringed instruments. But they are only those there who belong in that one home.

There is no rustic courtship in Malta save of the sheezyes sort along the Sabbath and Saints days' lanes, as they all repair together for mass at the casals or villages. Then the women wear the faldeffa or black cloaklike scart. The hereditary custom is to cover the face with this. But they do not until after they are wed and are mothers, which is often at thirteen and fourteen years of age.

There are no curious conditions here preceding marriage except that the lover must be able to rent a bit of ground and purchase a donkey and two goats or sheep, as the milk of the island is furnished by the latter animals; and he must solemnly pledge that he will never deprive his betrothed the life right of attendance at the festivals of St. Peter-Paul's, St. John and St. Gregory, which are respectfully celebrated at Citta Vecchia, Valetta and Casal Zeitun. And this is not much to ask by a pretty woman who never wears shoes, is never from home on any other occasion, who holds her picturesque household bravely together, and who, before she is forty years of age and often a grandmother, will bear her husband all the way from a dozen to two-score of happy, hopeful progeny.

One feature of Maltese rustic life will always remain with me as a strange but pleasant memory. This is their Arab chants. These have been handed down from the Berber and Moorish invaders of many centuries ago, and like the Gipsy language, are preserved vocally. But countless chants are improvised, and the hesitant and then other ting character of these adds impressively to their weird effect. Men, women and children chant under all circumstances and conditions. I have heard it to that extent from surrounding workers in fields invisible by their huge walls from the highway, that it seemed as though some mighty organ were touched by hands so masterful that a splendid symphony came from innumerable minor discordant chords.

EDGAR L. WAKEMAN.

Some Pretty Big Things.

The largest heathen temple in the world is at Seringham, India.

The new clock being made for St. Paul's cathedral in London will have a face thirty feet in diameter. The hammer which strikes the bell weighs 680 pounds.

The largest congregation in America is St. Stanislaus Kostka, in Chicago, which has 30,000 communicants. The number of attendants at the several masses every Sunday frequently exceeds 15,000.

The longest single span of wire rope in the world is that now in use in a dam at Austin, Tex. The main cable is 1,350 feet long and two and one-half inches in diameter. The hoisting apparatus will lift a weight of seven tons and carry it the entire length of the span in about a minute and a half.

Lost By a Comma.

We remember an instance in which the substitution of a comma for a hyphen cost the United States a very large amount of revenue. A clause had been placed in a Tariff Act admitting free of duty, among other things, "fruit-trees." But the printers made it "fruit trees," and before the mistake could be remedied thousands of dollars' worth of fruit and trees, which were properly taxable, had been admitted duty-free.—*Pall Mall Budget*.

THEY FOLLOWED COPY.

The New Man's Poem and the Printer's Interpretation of It.

"Horrors, what an obscure hand you write!" said the literary editor to the new space writer as he turned in a bit of poetry.

"Oh, it's plain enough," interjected the poet hastily. "The rhymes and the meter will help the compositor out, and there'll not be the least bit of trouble if they just follow the copy."

And the manuscript went hustling up the tube to the composing room.

"Sa-ay, what dod-gasted chump has been sendin' in his Chinese laundry bill for copy?" wildly yelled out slug 10 wiping a sudden burst of perspiration from his forehead and glaring at his last take. "I can't make head or tail out of this thing!"

"Well, Chinese or no Chinese," cried the hurrying foreman, "make whatever you can out of it and snag it up in mighty short order, for we're late now."

And the type fairly jumped from the case into the stick.

"Good Caesar!" gasped the proofreader, clutching at his brow. "Are my eyes failing or is this a premonition of nervous prostration?" Then he rubbed his eyes and stared. "By the gods! either I've got the blind staggers or slug 10's on a royal toot!"

At that instant a scream came down the spout: "Rush that proof along for heaven's sake! We're late!"

The proofreader groaned, galloped down the column, hesitated, and then desperately thrust the slip into the tube, huskily murmuring, "I compared it with the copy, and that's as near as I can get to Hebrew these days."

That night the new space writer hurriedly wrapped up and addressed a copy of the issue without a glance and dropped it into the mail, with this brief note:—

"My Onliest Sweet and Dearest Marie—I sent you a number of the Sunday supplement containing my little poem. Your face was an ever present inspiration to me when I wrote, and happy thoughts of you inspired every sentence. Here you will find expressed what I have ever felt toward you, but have hardly dared to voice before. Till death, etc."

Miss Marie Cortlandt Van Clifton glanced through the tender note, blushed with pleasure, and hurriedly opening the paper, read:—

TO MARIE.
When the breeze from the bluebottle's blustering
Twirls the toads in a torporous coil,
And the whiskey wine of the wheedlesome whim
Drowns the roll of the rattatouille,
Then I dream in the shade of the shally-go-shee,
When the hilt of the hockety-hoo!
Brings the snail of the stale poppy-cods blundered
In blue.
From the willy-wad over the way,
Ah, the slithering shoe and the blinketty-blanks
When the punting falls from the bough
In the blast of a hurricane's hickety hanks
Over the hilt of the hockety-hoo!
Give the rignarole the clangery-wang,
If they care for such hildeludee;
But this gaubob-kick of the whangery-bang
Keeps the higgledy-piggledy for me.

LENOVO.
It is a pilli-pod-dille and a lalozibung
When the lollypop covers the ground,
Yet the polidide pervades plunkety-pung
When the heart jumpy-cogies around.
If the soul cannot snop at the guggle-some cart,
Seeking successe in glugzety-zing,
It is useless to say to the pulsing heart,
"Yankee doodle kee chuggety-chug!"

The new space writer and Miss Marie Cortlandt Van Clifton are not engaged now.

"UNCLE TOM'S CABIN."

Many of the Characters Drawn by Mrs. Stowe Are Still Alive.

Charles E. L. Wingate, of Boston, has long had an interest in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and has found in the course of his researches that almost every one of its characters had an original in actual life. He thus tells of them:

"Josiah Benson and Sam Pete were the prototypes of 'Uncle Tom.' The first half of the character's life was drawn from Benson, while the career of Pete, who died exactly as Mrs. Stowe described, formed the basis of the second part of the story. Benson, who became a preacher, had shown fight while in the service of a cruel master and, being overthrown, both of his arms were broken. The arms were never set and Benson remained a cripple until his death, five years ago.

"The original of George Harris is still alive. A few months ago he visited Boston to see his brother Milton, an employee in the sub-treasury here. Lewis George Clarke, for such is his real name, was the first slave who, after running away from his master, was allowed to take the platform against slavery. Twice he was sold at the block, the first time at Stamford, Ky., to Tom Kennedy, the original Legree, and the second time at Garrett, Ky., to Kennedy's son. At the latter sale Clarke brought \$1 250. Though Clarke's parents were slaves they were nearly white, and his sister, Delia, the original of Emeline in the story, became the wife of a Frenchman, who bought her in the auction pen at New Orleans and took her to Mexico; she died some years ago.

"Lewis made his escape in 1811, a year after his brother Milton had run away, and went to Canada in the way stated in the story. At one time an attempt was made by the original of Marks, the lawyer, to kidnap Lewis and his brother, but though Milton was carried to the court house at Madison, he was quickly rescued by the abolitionists. Eliza, who was chased by the bloodhounds over the ice, was not the wife of Lewis, but otherwise the incident was true.

"It was when Lewis Clarke was living with Gerrit Smith that Mrs. Stowe saw him and obtained the facts for her powerful novel. He has often maintained that so far from being overdrawn, the sketches of life could have been made, with truth, even more vivid. He, himself, has of late been a lecturer.

"A few years ago the original of Eva was living in Washington, and as her death has not been chronicled she may today be still in the capital city. She was Miss Letcher, of a prominent Southern family, and became the wife of Gen. Kennedy, the master of Lewis Clarke. Kennedy was made over by Mrs. Stowe into Legree and his son in St. Clair, while the Letcher family served as prototypes of the Selbys. The death of Eva necessitated the choice of another girl to give the coloring of truth to that pathetic picture, and so Annie Campbell, a daughter

of Mr. Clarke's grandfather, was taken as a model. Topsy was a colored girl named Mills, who belonged to Mrs. Banton, of Lincoln County, Ky."

How They Shave in Cuba.

A correspondent in the West Indies writes us as follows concerning the Cuban barbers: "In lathering the patient no brush is used as with us. Instead a sort of bowl, made so that it fits about the neck, is used. In this the lather is made and applied to the face with the fingers of the operator. After the usual method of shaving the customer is invited to go to a wash bowl and wash his own face, after which he resumes his chair and the barber dresses his hair. This operation is regarded by the barber as the most important part of his vocation, and he spends twice as much time on the hair as he does in shaving. When the tedious process is ended the charge is ten cents in specie or twenty five cents in the paper currency of the country.—*National Barber*.

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Think Of It In use for more than Eighty Years, and still leads.

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Should have Johnson's Anodyne Liniment in the house for Croup, Colds, Sore Throat, Tonsillitis, Cuts, Bruises, Cramps and Pains liable to occur in any family without notice. Delays may cost a life. Relieves all Summer Complaints like malarial. Price, 30 cts. per bottle; 6 bottles, \$2. Express sent, F. S. Johnson & Co., Boston, Mass.

Every Mother

A Talk About Printing.

Job Printing is a comparatively new department with PROGRESS.

We have always had a certain amount of job printing plant and used it in making our newspaper as handsome and attractive as possible, but a complete outfit was not ours until recently.

We have a new and complete plant now, suitable for all kinds of printing, and are open for orders.

We believe in doing work as well as it can be done and our aim will be: First, to turn out good printing—nothing that we will have cause to be ashamed of so far as the mechanical work is concerned.

The reputation won by PROGRESS as a handsome, well-printed newspaper will also be the reputation of "PROGRESS Print," for that will be the name of the job department.

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We would like to do some of it for you. If you want it well done we will give you satisfaction. We don't ask for it on the plea of cheapness—our prices will be reasonable, but we are not in the business to cut rates. Quotations will be given cheerfully, but don't expect that they will always be lower than those of other printers.

Our **Stock** is new, varied and good—bought at the lowest figures and all suitable for the times.

Our **Type** is new, the latest style of letter and the handsomest assortment we could select.

Our **Presses** are new and the best.

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DOCTOR'S ORDERS.

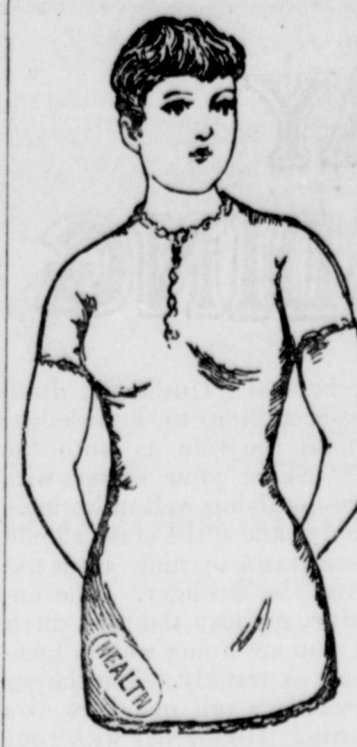
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