

quaintness and peacefulness of the villages and hamlets, the radiance of the valleys and the noble picturesqueness of the forests and mountains, seem to have given a reflective peacefulness, sunniness and even virility to the people.

The shepherd is always one of the villagers. He or she shares their everyday life. The feasts, espousals, marriages, funerals, all are theirs for enjoyment and contemplation. Nearly every family has its own little flock. Often several of these are merged into a larger flock and taken to the highest mountain-lands for the entire summer. In such cases a shepherd and his family accompany them, and they live much as do their kind in Apulia. In October the same flock will be driven to the moors and marshes of Maremma, where the shepherd and his family subsist almost entirely on snared wild fowl which comes here in myriads to escape the winters of the British Isles, the Baltic regions and the German forests.

But tens of thousands of little flocks led by tens of thousands of little shepherds and shepherdesses leave the village greggia or sheep-fold and home every morning for the higher glades. Sometimes a dog, often a pig trained to herd the flock, goes with them. If a maiden has charge of the flock she will have her spindle or knitting, and will work and sing and tend her flock the whole day long. If a lad or stripling lead a flock, he will let the pig or dog tend the sheep, with an occasional moment of executive observation, and the rest of the day he gathers mushrooms, hunts the young of birds, all of which are eagerly eaten save those of the swallow and hawk, snares forest fowl, or pipes on his flute in idle fantasy.

Both must bring a backload of ferns, grass, oak, elm or vine leaves, with the flocks at night. Some of this is for temporary use; but the winter store is thus chiefly gathered. I have counted more than 100 of these little flocks descending from the mountains with the shepherds at eventide. The valleys are voiceful with thousands of tinkling bells, with the notes from hundreds of shepherds' flutes, with the *trilli* of scores of shepherds songs. Then, as the shadows fall softly upon the hamlets, comes the housing of the sheep in the greggia, and the pastoral yields to the prosaic, while "Ravella" and "Nencia" gain new strength for the morrow from their bowl of steaming polenta or porridge of crushed white beans.

The fairest possession of all Italy is sunny Sicily. Yet Sicily has no homes for the lowly of the countryside as we know and love even the lowliest home. Nearly all Sicilians are serfs of the few. Doubtless 2,500,000 souls out of Sicily's entire population of 2,584,000 inhabitants hold this relation to the nobility, governing classes and ecclesiastics. An infinite compassion fires one's heart for the hopelessness of such a people, and when interest in tremendous natural phenomena, classic regions and dead age remains lessens, the pathetic side of life begins to possess and hurt you. Any land boasting no progressive farming population, masters of the soil they till, or without a fairly contented peasantry possessing secure and well-defined rights in their holdings, is doomed to desertion and decay. In the entire length and breadth of this island, from

the highways not half a hundred "farm-houses" will be seen. These are not farm-houses as we know them. Each is a desolate stone structure, inhabited by the family of some soprantendente or overseer, where tools are stored, and in the busiest seasons of labor a gang of wolfish-faced men and women are fed on slops, and herded at night on stone benches for sleep. The montanaro or mountaineer, the atore or ploughman, the pecorajo or shepherd, the vignajo or vine-dresser, the vendemiatore or grape-gatherer, the miltere or reaper, and every manner of human animal that labors with flocks or in vineyard or field; is in fact a contadino or villager, living in low and poisonous hovels in cities or hamlets, from out of which hollow-eyed crowds pour before day-light, munching their food as they drag themselves to their flocks in the mountains or their toil in the vineyards and fields.

EDGAR L. WAKEMAN.

### PRESIDENTIAL MANSIONS.

Everyone thinks that President Cleveland's family will spend but little time in the Executive Mansion during his administration.

The White House has gotten the reputation of being unhealthy, and it is a well known fact that the Presidents of the last decade have been ailing while they stayed in it. There have been nine deaths connected with the last administration, and President Harrison's freedom from illness may be attributed to his daily drives and long walks. The McKee children of the White House have not been well at times, and the President naturally fears for baby Ruth. President Arthur had all the doctors of the country discussing his health during the latter part of his administration, and President Cleveland, after his marriage, spent the greater part of the years, of his first administration at Oak View. There are a number of large houses in the city which would make good presidential residences, and if the President can keep his home away from his business office it will add to his privacy and happiness. The house which it is said Mr. Cleveland is seriously considering is the famous Porter mansion. This is within a stone's throw of the White House, and it is a massive three-story building with great rooms and a generous side and rear yard. Its front is covered with vines and it has a big ball room and splendid parlors. The grounds are filled with shade trees and the place could be made one of the most comfortable at the capital. It is on H street between 17th and 18th, not far from the Metropolitan Club and just around the corner from the War Department. It is one of the most historic mansions of the capital. It was last occupied by Admiral Porter, and, I think, it now belongs to his estate. It was built by Richard Rush when he was attorney general of the United States during Madison's second administration, and it has been the abiding place of judges, generals and statesmen. Rush was a diplomat and was afterward one of our foreign ministers. He entertained in it magnificently and after he left it it was rented by two ministers from England in the days when England did own a legation here. One of them, Lord Lyons, built the ball room which is annexed to it. The house was once owned, by Gen. Phil Kearney, and Hamilton Fish also owned and occupied

it at one time. Admiral Porter bought it about twenty years ago, and he lived in it till the day of his death.

### WHERE PRESIDENTS HAVE LIVED.

A number of the Presidents of the past have had homes outside of the White house. John Quincy Adams kept up an establishment of F street opposite the Ebbitt house during a part of his administration, and when Madison was burnt out of the White House by the British he moved over to New York avenue and occupied the old Taylor mansion. This house still stands. It is known as the Octagon house and it was within it that Madison signed the treaty of Ghent. It is a vast building of two stories and an attic, and was at the time it was built the finest house in the United States. It has eight sides and the front is of an oval shape, rising from the ground to the roof like a great bay window or mammoth column cut in half and fastened to the front of the house. This makes an oval half and the room above it on the second story is an oval, and it was in this that the famous treaty was signed. I walked up the battered steps the other day and entered this room. Its doors are curved in shape. Its floor is of great blocks of marble, and the whole interior of the house is full of evidences of its past magnificence. Everything now, however, is going to ruin. The house has long since been condemned by the health authorities and the plaster is dropping from the walls which once rang back the laugh of Dolly Madison or phonographically received the bon mots of Alexander Hamilton and Henry Clay. Big brass knobs which were handled by the statesmen of the past are now tarnished with age and the keyhole to the front door where Madison used to let himself in when he came home late at night is rusted, but its opening shows that the key which went into it must have been at least two inches long. This house was owned by the great millionaire of 1800. His name was Taylor, and he had, it is said, an income of \$75,000 a year and spent \$33,000 annually on race horses. He owned 500 slaves, had iron mines, ships and other works, all run by his own slaves. He entertained like a prince and Madison came to his house as his guest. After stopping here for a time he moved to the corner of twentieth street and Pennsylvania avenue, where there is now a drug store, and this formed his home. President Madison afterward bought the house which is now occupied by the Cosmos Club. This is just across from the Arlington hotel, and it was here that Dolly Madison lived after her husband's death.

### POSSIBLE PRESIDENTIAL MANSIONS.

The last administration occupied some of the best houses at the capital, and if President Cleveland cares to change his residence a number of these will be at his disposal. Vice President Morton has not announced that he will leave Washington, but his big mansion just off of Scott's circle would make a splendid house for a President. It has vast parlors, a kitchen big enough to feed an army, and the late Vice President has spent more money on it and in it since he came here than he has received in the way of salary. The house originally cost something over a hundred thousand dollars and it was estimated that his additions cost in the neighborhood of \$50,000. It has along its south side two