

OUR BROKEN WALLS.

Over a winding, wayside wall,
Bagged and rough and gray,
There crept a tender and clinging vine,
Tirelessly day by day.
At last its mantle of softest tint
Covered each jagged seam,
The straggling wall, half broken down,
Became, with that leafy, tinted crown,
Fair as an artist's dream.

Oh, for the kindness that clings and twines
Over life's broken wall,
That blossoms above the scars of pain,
Striving to hide them all!
Oh, for the helpful, ministering hands,
Benevolent, willing feet,
That spread their mantles of tender thought
O'er life's hard places, till Time has wrought
Its healing—divine, complete.
—Lanta Wilson Smith, in Youth's Companion.

THE PURPLE EGG.

It Omened an Emperor and Created a Suicide.

BY ANATOLE FRANCE.

The other night, while with a number of friends, I heard a story of a woman who had been driven to a strange suicide by terror and remorse. She was highly bred and cultured. Suspected of complicity in a crime of which she had been a mute witness, in despair at her irreparable cowardice, tormented by a perpetual nightmare that showed her husband pointing her out with his rotting finger to the magistrates, she became the helpless prey of her overwrought nerves. A trifling circumstance determined her fate. Her little nephew was living with her. One morning, as usual, he was learning his lesson in the dining room; she was sitting near by. The child began to translate, word for word, some verses from Sophocles. He said over the Greek and French terms as he wrote them out: "Kara teion, the divine head; Iokastes, of Yocasta; letneked, is dead."

Sposa konnen, tearing her hair; kalei, she calls; Laion nekron, dead Lais. Eiseidomen, we saw; ten ganaika kremastan, the woman hanged." He wound up with a flourish of his pen, stuck out his tongue violet with ink and sang: "Hanged! hanged! hanged!" The wretched woman, her will-power utterly destroyed, obeyed the suggestion of the thrice-heard word. She rose without a word, without a glance, and hastened to her room. A few hours later the commissary of police, called in to investigate her violent end, made this reflection: "I have seen many a woman who has committed suicide. This is the first one I've known to hang herself."

This case recalled a similar one to my mind, that of my unfortunate comrade and friend, Alexandre Mansel. In the foregoing story the heroine was killed by a verse of Sophocles; my friend's life was brought to an end by a sentence of Lamprides.

Mansel, who was a schoolmate of mine at the Lycee of Avrauches, was different from all other boys. He seemed both older and younger than he really was. Small and slight, at fifteen he was afraid of all the bugaboos that terrify children of five. He had a horror of the dark. We were not fond of him; he would have become our butt if he had not impressed us by a certain fierce pride and his record as a clever scholar. Though he worked spasmodically, he often stood at the head of his class. They used to say that he talked at night in the dormitory and walked in his sleep. None of us could swear to it, for we never woke after our heads once touched the pillow.

For a long time I was more curious about him than fond of him. We suddenly grew great friends on an excursion that we all took together to the abbey of Mont St. Michel. We had walked barefooted along the shingle, carrying our shoes and our luncheon on the end of our sticks, all singing at the top of our voices. We crossed the drawbridge and sat down side by side on one of the old cannon, rusted by five centuries of rain and spray. Looking with his dim eyes from the old stones to the sky, swinging his bare feet, Alexandre abruptly spoke to me:

"I should like to have been a knight in the old wars. I would have taken a hundred cannon. I would have fought single-handed on the ramparts, and the Archangel St. Michael would have stood over my head like a white cloud."

From that day on I understood far better than before my schoolmate's character. I discovered that it was founded on an immense pride that I had not suspected. I need not tell you that at fifteen I was not a profound psychologist, and Mansel's pride was too subtle to be at first evident. It extended itself to vague chimeras and had no tangible form. Yet it inspired all my friend's sentiments and gave a sort of unity to his whimsical, incoherent ideas.

old as she looked. She was thin and sallow; her eyes glittered in their dark sockets under their reddened lids. In spite of the warm summer day she was swathed, head and all, in black garments. But the strangest thing about her was the metal circlet that clasped her brow like a diadem.

"Here is my mother; she has her neuralgia." M. Mansel made me welcome in a faint voice and, observing my puzzled look, said, smiling: "My young sir, what you take for a crown is a magnetic circle I wear to cure my headaches."

Mansel led me into the garden, where we caught sight of a little bald man gliding down the path like a phantom. He was so frail and slight that he looked as if the wind would blow him away. His uncertain gait, his long, thin neck craned forward, his head no bigger than your fist, his sidewise glances, his hopping steps, his short arms raised like wings, gave him quite the appearance of some new sort of fowl. My companion told me that it was his father, but that we must let him go to the poultry yard, which he infinitely preferred to all the rest of his domain; he lived among his hens and had almost lost the habit of talking with human beings. The odd little figure at this moment vanished, and loud cackling rose in the air.

During the short stroll we took in the garden, Mansel told me that at dinner I would meet his grandmother; that she was a good old soul, but that I must not pay much attention to what she said, as she was often a little out of her mind.

The bell rang for dinner. M. Mansel followed us into the house, carrying a basket of eggs. "Eighteen today," he said, in a clucking voice.

A delicious omelet appeared. I was seated between M. Mansel, sighing under her diadem, and her mother, a round-cheeked, toothless, old Normandy woman, who smiled with her eyes. She seemed delightful to me. While we were eating our roast duck and creamed chicken the old lady told us amusing stories that showed no signs of weakening faculties. On the contrary, she appeared the merriest and sanest member of the family.

After dinner we went into a parlor furnished in black walnut and yellow Utrecht velvet. Under the globe of the gilt clock on the mantel lay a purple egg that at once drew my attention. With a child's inexplicable curiosity I could not take my eyes off it. But I must add that the egg was of a strange and splendid color—a royal purple, not in the slightest manner recalling the wine-colored Easter eggs, dipped in beet-juice, that delight the children at all the fruit-stands. I could not resist making a remark about it.

M. Mansel replied by an admiring cackle: "My young sir, that is not a dyed egg, as you seem to think. It was laid just as you see it there by a Cingalese hen of mine. It is a phenomenal egg."

"You must not forget to add, my dear," sighed Mme. Mansel, "that it was laid the very day our Alexandre was born."

"Just so," returned the father. The old grandmother, in the meantime, looked at me with mocking eyes, and with an expressive movement of her lips betrayed her skepticism.

"Hum!" she murmured, "hens sometimes hatch what they haven't laid, and if some mischievous neighbor should happen to slip into their nest—"

"Don't listen to her!" broke in her grandson, violently. "You know what I told you! Don't listen to her!"

"It's a fact," repeated M. Mansel, fixing his round eye on the purple egg.

Not long after I lost sight of Alexandre. My mother sent me to Paris to finish my studies. I entered the School of Medicine. About the time that I was preparing my doctor's thesis, I received a letter from my mother, in which she told me that my friend had been very ill; he had had some strange seizure, on recovering from which he had become exceedingly timid and suspicious; but he was quite harmless, and, in spite of his troubled health and reason, he showed a remarkable gift for mathematics. This news did not surprise me. Many a time, while studying diseases of the nerve-centres, I had called upon mentally my poor friend from St. Julien and, in spite of myself, had made a

prognosis of general paralysis threatening this son of a neuralgic mother and a microcephalic, rheumatic father. At first I seemed to be on the wrong scent. Alexandre Mansel, on reaching manhood, regained normal health and gave unmistakable proofs of his fine intellectual gifts. He carried on extensive mathematical studies; he even sent to the Academy of Sciences the solution of several difficult equations. Absorbed in these and kindred subjects, he rarely found time to write me. His letters were clear, friendly, well composed; nothing could be found in them to attract the attention of the most suspicious neurologist. Soon, however, our correspondence came to an end, and for ten years I did not get a word from him.

I was greatly surprised last year when my servant handed me Alexandre Mansel's card, saying that the gentleman was waiting for me in the antechamber. I was in my office discussing a professional question of some importance with a colleague. Excusing myself for a moment, I hastened to greet my old school-fellow. I found him much aged, bald, haggard, fearfully emaciated. I took him by the arm and led him into the drawing room.

"I am delighted to see you once more," he said, "and I have a great deal to tell you. I am a victim of unheard-of persecutions. But I am brave, I shall fight to the end, I shall triumph over my enemies!"

These words alarmed me, as they would have alarmed any neurologist. In them I traced a symptom of the affection by which my friend was threatened according to every law of heredity and which had appeared dormant till now.

"My dear fellow," I said to him, "you shall tell me all this later. Stay here a moment, I am settling a little matter in my office. Take a book to kill time till I join you."

I have a great many books in my drawing room—there must be 6000 volumes in the three bookcases. Why was it that my unlucky friend picked out the very one that could harm him and opened it at the fatal page? I talked for about 20 minutes longer with my colleague; having ushered him out I returned to the drawing room where I had left Mansel. I found the unfortunate fellow in an alarming state. He was showering blows on a book open before him that I at once recognized as a translation of the "History of Augustus." In a loud voice he kept repeating this sentence of Lamprides: "On the day when Alexander Severus was born, a hen belonging to the father of the babe laid a red egg, a presage of the imperial purple which the child was to assume."

His excitement rose to fury. He foamed at the mouth. He shouted: "The egg, the egg that was laid on my birthday! I am an emperor! I know you want to kill me! Don't come near me, wretch!"

He paced rapidly up and down. Then coming back toward me, with his arms spread wide, he said: "My friend, my old comrade, what do you want me to give you? Emperor! Emperor!—my father was right—the purple egg—emperor I shall and must be—scoundrel! why did you hide that book from me? I will punish you for high treason—emperor!—emperor!—I must be it!—yes, it is my duty!"

He rushed out. I vainly tried to stop him. He escaped from me. The rest is well known. All the papers told how on leaving my house he bought a revolver and blew out the brains of the sentinel who barred the gate of the Elysee palace against him.

Thus a phrase written in the fourth century by a Latin historian causes 1500 years later the death of an unlucky French soldier. Who will ever unravel the skein of cause and effect? Who can be sure of saying, "I know what I am doing," as he performs some trifling act? This is all there is to tell. The rest concerns only medical statistics and can be summed up in a few words. Mansel, placed in a private asylum, remained there a fortnight in a state of violent madness. Then he lapsed into utter imbecility, during which his gluttony led him to eating the wax used for polishing the floors. He choked to death, three months ago, swallowing a sponge.—Argonaut.

Killed a Vampire.

The other morning Mr. E. M. Riley killed a vampire in his room on Lamar street. It measured 13 1-8 inches from tip to tip of wings and 5 inches from nose to end of tail. Its body was covered with purplish-gray fur like satin. Its wings were brownish black, and to the touch were like soft silk. Its head resembled a bulldog's. When held to the floor by Mr. Riley with a stick it emitted a hissing noise like a goose. It is several times the size of a leatherwing bat.—Selma Times.

"Is Civilization a Failure?"

A Johannesburg Zarp "rushed" two natives for a sovereign each on the ground that their passes were not in order. The "nigs," while readily "parting," took note of the Zarp's number and reported him, and he has now four months in which to meditate on the progress of civilization among the aborigines of South Africa.—African Review.

OUR FARMERS IN LUCK.

Made More Money in 1898 Than Ever Before in the Country's History.

The farmers of this country made more money in 1898 than ever before in its history. The statistical report from the department of agriculture shows unprecedented crops, unprecedented prices and unprecedented prosperity. The corn crop in 1898 amounted to 2,283,875,166 bushels, valued at \$449,276,030; in 1877 it was 1,902,967,933 bushels, valued at \$501,072,852. In 1898, according to present estimates, the volume was not only largely increased, but the farm value of corn throughout the country averages 2.4 cents a bushel more than in 1897.

The wheat crop in 1898, at 72 cents a bushel, was valued at \$427,684,346; in 1897, at 80.8 per bushel, it was valued at \$428,547,121. The increase in 1898 was 1,411,692 acres, the largest in history, and the crop was unprecedented in quality, quantity and price.

The barley crop in 1897 was worth \$25,142,139 at 37 cents a bushel. The figures for 1898 are not in yet, but the price is 41.4 cents a bushel and the preliminary report shows a cropslightly above the average. The same may be said of rye, which is quoted at 46.3 cents a bushel, against 44.7 in 1897.

The farm price for oats in 1898, according to the official figures of the agricultural department, is 25.6 cents a bushel, against 21.2 for 1897 and 19.5 in 1896. The totals are not in yet, but in 1897 the crop was valued at \$147,974,719.

Potatoes are now worth 41.4 cents a bushel on the farm, which is a large falling off from 1897, when they sold for 54.7 cents, but it is said that the difference will be more than made up by the increase in the volume of the crop, which is believed to be 21 per cent. greater than in 1897, when the total was valued at \$88,643,059.

The hay crop of the United States in 1897 was valued at \$401,390,728, with hay selling at \$8.62 a ton. In 1898 the crop was the best on record, and it is selling on an average of \$6 a ton throughout the country.

During the calendar year ended December 31, the value of the breadstuffs sold abroad was \$317,000,000, provisions \$174,000,000 and cotton \$233,000,000, making a total of \$724,000,000 worth of farm products exported and sold at better prices than were ever known before.

An Unexpected Phase.

One afternoon recently a Brushvane mother conscientiously decided that her blue-eyed boy needed a vigorous application of the hair-brush treatment and armed herself with the intention of giving it. But the lad, disagreeing with her diagnosis of the case, sought safety in flight and brought up in the attic. This is reached from the floor below by a short ladder and through an aperture that is not calculated to pass large people. The mother belongs to this class and made a vain effort to follow the fugitive from justice. She flourished the brush and commanded him to come out, but he refused and irreverently jeered at her efforts to reach him. When the father came home to dinner he was informed of the situation and grew wroth as he listened to the ex-parte presentation of the case. He would have that boy if he had to tear the house down, and started for the attic. It was close work, and his surprise could not be expressed in words when the boy, instead of cowering in a corner, came heartily to his assistance.

"Try to wriggle through, dad," urged the lad, as he renewed his hold under the paternal arms and pulled for all he was worth. "Keep wriggling. It's a close fit, but you'll make it. Never mind the shirt. There you are," as the father came through. "We're in great luck. I thought she'd chase you up here as soon as you got home. Come over here and sit down till she cools off."

What could you do with a boy like that?—Detroit Free Press.

Unfortunately.

"Yes, that's his picture," explained Margaret Empstead proudly as she handed the photograph of a young man to Dorothy Green, who had just run in for a minute on her way down town, "he had it taken the day after we became engaged."

"Is that so?" queried Dorothy, as she scrutinized the picture closely. "Yes, he isn't so handsome," went on Margaret, "but there's something attractive about his face, don't you think?"

"Indeed I do," replied Dorothy. "I've often thought about it, you know," continued the fiancee, "and I think it's one of those faces that grow on you, don't you?"

"Yes," answered Dorothy with a little curl to her lip, "I should imagine so. It grew on him, didn't it?"—Detroit Free Press.

A Possible Millionaire.

"Blotters?" asked the swarthy peddler, putting his head inside the door. "Blotters?" echoed the man standing up at the desk. "I should say not. This is an insurance office. Get along."

"Yessa," said the swarthy peddler, "Got any blotters for give away?"—Chicago Tribune.

DR. TALMAGE'S SERMON.

SUNDAY'S DISCOURSE BY THE NOTED DIVINE.

Subject: "Advice to Commercial Drummers—Many Are the Temptations That Beset Traveling Men—Christian Associations Necessary."

Text: "The chariots shall rage in the streets; they shall justle one against another in the broad ways; they shall run like the lightnings."—Nahum II., 4.

It has been found out that many of the arts and discoveries which we suppose were peculiar to our own age are merely the restoration of the arts and discoveries of thousands of years ago. I suppose that the past centuries have forgotten more than the present century knows. It seems to me that they must have known thousands of years ago in the days of Nineveh of the uses of steam and its application to swift travel. In my text I hear the rush of the rail train, the clang of the wheels and the jamming of the car couplings. The chariots shall rage in the streets; they shall justle one against another in the broad ways; they shall run like lightnings; they shall run like the lightnings.

Have you ever taken your position in the night far away from a depot along the track waiting to see the rail train come at full speed? At first you heard in the distance a rumbling, like the coming of a storm, then you saw the flash of the headlight of the locomotive as it turned the curve; then you saw the wider glare of the fiery eye of the train as it came plunging toward you; then you heard the shriek of the whistle that froze all the echoes; then you saw the hurricane dash of cinders; then you felt the jar of the passing earthquake and you saw the shot thunderbolt of the express train. Well, it seems that we can hear the passing of a midnight express train in my text. "The chariots shall rage in the streets; they shall justle one against another in the broad ways; they shall run like lightnings; they shall run like the lightnings."

I halt the train long enough to get on board, and I go through the cars, and I find three-fourths of the passengers are commercial travelers. They are a folk peculiar to themselves, easily recognized, at home on all the trains, not startled by the sudden dropping of the brakes, familiar with all the railroad signals, can tell you what is the next station, how long the train will stop, will place the passengers take luncheon at, can give you information on almost any subject, are cosmopolitan, at home everywhere from Halifax to San Francisco. They are on the 8 o'clock morning train, on the noon train, on the midnight train. You take a berth in a sleeping car, and either above you or beneath you is one of these gentlemen. There are 100,000 professional commercial travelers in the United States, but 500,000 would not include all those who are sometimes engaged in this service. They spend millions of dollars every day in the hotels and in the rail trains. They have their official newspaper organ. They have their mutual benefit association, about 4000 names on the rolls, and have already distributed more than \$200,000 among families of deceased members. They are ubiquitous, unique and tremendous for good or evil. All the tendencies of merchandise are toward their multiplication. The house that stands back on its dignity and waits for customers to come, instead of going to seek bargain makers, will have more and more its goods on the shelf and will gradually lose its control of the markets. While the great, enterprising and successful houses will have their agents on all the trains, and their chariots will rage in the streets, they shall justle one against another in the broad ways. They shall run like lightnings; they shall run like the lightnings.

I think commercial travelers can stand a sermon of warm hearted sympathy. If you have any words of good cheer for them, you had better utter them. If you have any good, honest prayers for their behalf, they will be greatly obliged to you. I never knew a man yet who did not like to be prayed for; never knew a man yet that did not like to be helped. It seems to me this sermon is timely. At this season of the year there are tens of thousands of men going out to gather money and travel in the broad ways. The bitter curse of Almighty God will rest upon that commercial establishment which expects its employes to break the Sabbath. What right has a Christian merchant to sit down in church on the Sabbath when his clerks are traveling abroad through the land on that day? Get up, professed Christian merchant, so acting. You have no business here. Go out and call that boy back. There was a merchant in 1837 who wrote: "I should have been a dead man had it not been for the Sabbath. Obligated to work from morning until night through the whole week, I felt on Saturday, especially on Saturday afternoon, that I must have rest. It was like going into a dense fog. Everything looked dark and gloomy as if nothing could be saved. I dismissed all and kept the Sabbath in the old way. On Monday it was all sunshine, but had it not been for the Sabbath, I have no doubt I should have been in my grave."

Be ashamed to sell foreign fabrics or fruits unless you know something about the laws that govern them or the vineyards that grew them. Understand all about banking, about tariffs, about markets, about navigation, about foreign people—their characteristics and their political revolutions as they affect ours; about the harvests of Russia, the vineyards of Italy, the teafields of China. Learn about the great commercial centres of Carthage and Assyria and Phenicia. Read all about the Medici of Florence, mighty in trade, mighty in philanthropy. You belong to the royal family of merchants. Be worthy of that royal family. Oh, take my advice and turn the years of weariness into years of luxury.

But you have come now near the end of your railroad travel. You begin to travel. Now, let me say, there are two or three things you ought to remember. First, that all the trade you get by the practice of "treating" will not stick. If you cannot get custom except by tipping a wineglass with somebody, you had better not get his custom. An old commercial traveler gives us his experience that trade got by "treating" always damages the house that gets it in one way or the other.

O commercial traveler, though your firm may give you the largest salary of any man in your line, though they might give you ten per cent. of all you sell, or twenty per cent. or fifty per cent. or ninety-nine per cent., they cannot pay enough to make it worth your while to ruin your soul. Besides that, a commercial house never compensates a man who has been morally ruined in their employ. A young man in Philadelphia was turned out from his employ because of inebriation got in the service of the merchant who employed him, and here is the letter he wrote to his employer:

"Sir—I came into your service uncorrupted in principles and in morals, but the rules of your house required me to spend my evenings at places of public entertainment and amusement in search of customers. To accomplish my work in your service I was obliged to drink with them and join them in their pleasures and pleasures I did not my choice, but the rule of the house. I went with them to the theatre and the billiard table, but it was not my choice. I did not wish to go; I went in your service. It was not my pleasure so to do, but I was the conductor and companion of the simple ones, void alike of understanding and of principles, in their sinful pleasures and deeds of deeper darkness, that I might retain them as your customers. Your interest required it. I have added thousands of dollars to the profits of your trade, but at what expense you now see, and I know too well. You have become wealthy, but I am poor indeed, and now this cruel dismissal from your employ is the recompense I receive for a character ruined and prospects blasted in helping to make you a rich man! Alas for the man who gets such a result as this!"

Again, I charge you, tell the whole truth about anything you sell. Living commercial travelers will precede you. Lying commercial travelers will come right after you into the same store. Do not let their unfair competition tempt you from the straight line. It is an awful bargain that a man makes when he sells his goods and his soul at the same time. A young man in one of the stores of New York was selling some silks. He was binding them up when he said to the lady customer, "It is my duty to show you, that there is a fracture in that silk." She looked at it and rejected the goods. The head of the firm, hearing of it, wrote to the father of the young man in the country, saying: "Come and take your son away. He will never make a merchant." The father came in agitation, wondering what his boy had been doing, and the mother said: "I don't say anything; your son stood here at this counter and pointed out a fracture in the silk, and of course the lady wouldn't buy it. We are not responsible for the ignorance of customers. Customers must look for themselves." Your son will never make a merchant. "Is that all?" said the father. "Ah! I am prouder of my boy that I ever was. John, get your hat and come home."

But it is almost night, and you go back to the hotel. Now comes the mighty tug for the commercial traveler. Tell me where he spends his evenings, and I will tell you where he will spend eternally, and I will tell you what will be his worldly prospects. There is an abundance of choice. There is your room with the books. There are the Young Men's Christian Association rooms. There are the churches, the great ones of the Christian churches. There is the gambling saloon. There is the theatre. There is the house of infamy. Plenty of places to go to. But which, O immortal man, which? O God, which? "Well," you say, "I guess I will—I guess I will go to the theatre." Do you think the gambling place will do you any good? It will improve your bodily health, or your financial prospects, or your eternal fortunes? No man ever found the path to usefulness, or honor, or happiness, or commercial success, or any thing through the American theatre. "Well," you say, "I will go to the gambling saloon." I guess I will go to the gambling saloon. You will first go to look. Then you will go to play. You will make \$100, you will make \$500, you will make \$1000, you will make \$1500. Then you will lose all. Do you think the gambling money so to start again. You will make \$50, you will make \$100, you will make \$500. Then you will lose all. These wretches of the gambling saloon know how to tempt you. But mark this: All gamblers die poor. They may make fortunes—great fortunes—but they lose them.

But now the question is still open—Where will you spend your evening? O commercial travelers, how much will you give me to put you on the right track? Without charging you a farthing I will prescribe for you a plan which will save you for the future, and the next, if you will take it. Go, before you lose the Young Men's Christian Association of the city where you live. Get from them letters of introduction. Carry them out to the towns and cities where you go. If there be an such association in the place you visit, then present them at the shop of Christian churches, and hand them over to the pastors. Be not slow to arise in the devotional meeting and say: "I am a commercial traveler. I am far away from home, and I come in here to-night to seek Christian sympathy." Do not go to the highest style of amusement—do not go to the Young Men's Christian Association of the city where you live. Get from them letters of introduction. Carry them out to the towns and cities where you go. 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