

We have become the greatest exporting nation in the world.

Henry White, secretary of the American legation in London, quotes from a French consular report the statement that one good commercial traveler is worth ten thousand printed circulars in winning trade.

We presume that it is not for publication, but merely as an evidence of good faith, that the czar supplements his proposals for universal disarmament with a loan of \$150,000,000 to be expended on his artillery.

It is becoming more and more probable that the British invasion of the Sudan will open up a large and fertile region to the cultivation of Egyptian cotton, and this article is soon to be grown in India on a larger scale than ever before. Hence lower prices are looked for in England. How far such competition can go before it seriously affects the price of American cotton cannot easily be predicted.

The greatest gain of all from the departure of the horse will be in cleanliness. When he goes, the larger part of the work of the street-cleaners will have come to an end. The cleaning of the roadbeds will be a very simple matter, and can be done almost entirely by flushing them from the water mains. The same electricity which gives us the motor vehicles will give us in steadily increasing measure better lighting of our streets and houses, and better heating as well. Even the bicycle may return to its former favor and exceed it even, for with good pavements everywhere thousands of men and youths could use it on all pleasant days as their most enjoyable and most healthful method of transit to and from their places of occupation.

There are at the present time seventy-eight organizations in different sections of the city of Paris, France, composed of the school children who have left the schools. The object of these associations is to keep track of the children after leaving school, to bring them together at stated intervals for social and intellectual entertainment, to assist those who may be in distress, in exceptional cases, to endeavor to find positions for those out of employment, and, in general, to bring the influence of the graduate body to bear upon the present pupils in the schools. Some eight or ten thousand children were within the past year more or less regular attendants at meetings of these associations, and one of the committees of the city council has recommended that \$5000 be appropriated for the expenses of such organization.

A report on the work of the Agricultural Experiment stations for the fiscal year 1898, has been forwarded to Congress by the secretary of agriculture. According to the report the stations have, as a rule, steadily pursued their investigations, have accomplished much useful work and have increased their facilities for investigations. This has been partly owing to an increase in the number of officials competent to undertake such investigations. As a result, there has been a gain in the importance and thoroughness of the original inquiries pursued. Arrangements are being made to have in the future a more practical application of the results of investigations made so that farmers can be taught to make the best use of discoveries. Aid from the states is found to be necessary for this work, and, as a matter of fact, much encouragement has been afforded by the liberality displayed by the states.

United States Consul Boyle at Liverpool has communicated to the state department, Washington, some very interesting information respecting the great change that has taken place in England in the matter of street railways. He describes this movement as one feature of the remarkable "municipal socialism" which is taking possession of British cities, verifying the comment of Lord Rosebery that the London common council was conducting the greatest experiment in practical socialism the world had ever seen. Not content with municipal ownership of street railroads, electric and gas lighting plants, water supply and telephones in several cities, the municipal corporations built dwellings for workmen, ran hotels and operated magnificent baths. Recurring to the subject of electric street railways, Mr. Boyle says that the first line was started in Liverpool the other day, and describes the equipment. The Liverpool line is an overhead trolley, a committee of experts claiming to have discovered that the underground conduit system installed in New York, Washington, and Baltimore is a failure.

Teachers of English are doing a fine business in Havana. The Cubans are wonderfully eager to learn a nineteenth century language.

The town of Pullman, Ill., as organized and established by its founder, whose name it bears, is soon to give up its distinctive character and become in fact as well as in name a part of the municipality of Chicago. Under the supreme court decision the company is reported to be preparing to give up its building other than those used strictly for the purposes of car-building, which means that it must give up its control over the town of Pullman.

A German editor has been sentenced to more than four years imprisonment for lese-majeste against the Emperor's second son, a small boy in knickerbockers. Yet the offending article, which in itself was nothing, was published in the absence and without the knowledge of the editor. Convictions lese-majeste under the Emperor William have excelled anything ever known before in Europe, whether in medieval or ancient times, and one wonders why the German people tolerate them so quietly.

The largest sailing vessel afloat, just launched at Camden, Me., was christened, not by smashing a bottle of wine, but by throwing roses over her bow as she slid down the ways. This is a pretty innovation that will not only please the ardent opponents of wine, but will appeal to the love of the picturesquely beautiful. An American ship, built of American material, by American labor, in an American yard, could have no more auspicious beginning of its service in the American carrying trade than this peaceful and decorative garlanding at the hand of an American maiden.

A girl in England recently drowned herself because some "professor of palmistry" had "read the lines of her hand," and had predicted trouble for her. She was scared into self-murder by his reckless prophecy. Then her father, deploring her "stilly faith" in what he declared was idle folly, tried to find her body by throwing into the pond a loaf of bread ballasted with quicksilver, believing that the loaf would "jump around" when it floated over the spot where she lay. Superstitions die hard. This was a case of the kettle calling the pot black. How is it with those who regard this unfortunate girl and her ignorant father with pitying scorn? How many of all the soldiers would object to sitting down with thirteen at the table?

Reports from Fall River, says the Dry Goods Economist, show the year 1898 to have been a hard one with cotton manufacturers in that centre. The previous year, it had been thought, was bad enough, the average dividend yielded on a capital of nearly \$24,000,000 amounting to but 3.38 per cent., against 8.18 per cent. in 1895. Last year, however, the average earnings on the same capital amounted to 2.22 per cent. This gradual decrease in dividends is not surprising when we learn that little money has been spent on new equipments during the year. Experiments are, however, going on with new weaving machinery, and, as a result, of the recent agreement between a number of the factories, mill stocks have advanced and prices have improved. Hence it may be that Fall River, having begun to sell its product with more intelligence, may within the next twelve months have the nerve to put in modern machinery capable of producing the very highest grades of cotton goods, and thus once more provide for itself a basis for substantial prosperity.

The salvage system of the Salvation Army is to be introduced into San Francisco. This is an idea of General Booth, the basic principle being that idleness leads to evil, and that the man whose material wants are satisfied is more amenable to spiritual influence. The system is in operation in three cities in this country, New York, Philadelphia and Chicago. In the last named city ten large wagons are in constant service collecting waste, while a large number of men are employed in sorting the material for the market, and in repairing such broken articles of household furniture as can be made of use to poor people. Many women are also engaged in rescuing from the waste, articles of clothing which can be made serviceable by mending. The repaired articles are sold for a few cents each, the money thus received going to the one who made the repairs. There are many possibilities in the development of the idea, one addition in San Francisco being an arrangement with the newspaper publishers to clean out the offices in return for the waste paper.

OUR BROKEN WALLS.

Over a winding, wayside wall,
Ragged 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,
Beneficent, willing feet,
That spread rich 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 Suicido.

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 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; letseked, is dead."

Sposa konnen, tearing her hair; kalei, she calls; Laion nekron, dead Lais. . . . Eisedomen, we saw; ten gunaika kremenaten, 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 Avanches, 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 a terrified child 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 days. 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.

During the vacation following our excursion to Mont St. Michel, Mansel invited me to spend a day at his parents' home at St. Julien. Securing my mother's rather unwilling consent, I started off, in a white vest and blue tie, early one Sunday morning.

Alexandre, smiling like a happy child, was waiting for me on the threshold. He led me by the hand into the "best room." Though the house—half rustic, half bourgeoisie—was neither poor nor disorderly, I was oppressed on entering it, so silent and so dark. Near the window, whose slightly parted curtains denoted a certain curiosity, was seated a woman to all appearances old—perhaps not so 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."

Mnsel 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 Mnsel, Mansel, sighing under her diadem, and her mother, a round-cheeked, toothless, old Normandy woman, who smiled at her eyes. She seemed delighted 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 Mnsel, 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, "heas sometimes hatch what they haven't laid, and if some mischievous neighbor should happen to slip into their nest a—"

"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 up mentally my poor friend from St. Julien and, in spite of myself, had made a prognosis of general paralysis threatening this son of a neuragic 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 has-

tened 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 up 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.

QUAINT AND CURIOUS.

Tame snakes are used in Morocco to clear houses of rats and mice.

A Sicilian tribunal sentenced a noted forger to imprisonment for 189 years.

Tavelara is the smallest republic as to population, having only 53 men, women and children. It is 12 miles from Sardinia.

Besides the rinderpest, South Africa's worst plague consists in the myriads of grasshoppers, which are sometimes so dense that they stop railway trains.

There is a creature known as the hagfish, or myxine, which is in the habit of getting inside cod and similar fish and devouring the interior until only the skin and the skeleton are left.

Giles de Retz of France, the original "Blue Beard," was executed on Christmas Day, 1440, in atonement for a multitude of sins, which included the killing of six wives, from which the popular nursery story is derived.

There is a plant in Jamaica called the life plant, because it is almost impossible to kill it, or any portion of it. When a leaf is cut off and hung up by a string, it sends out white, thread-like roots, gathers moisture from the air, and begins to grow new leaves.

The seven principal Bibles in the world are the Koran of the Mohammedans, the Eddas of the Scandinavians, the Tripitikes of the Buddhists, the Five Kings of the Chinese, the Three Vedas of the Hindoos, the Zendavesta, and the Scriptures of the Christians.

A peculiar style of advertising resorted to in China is effective and inexpensive. When a Chinaman has a daughter closely approaching marriageable age an inverted jar on the roof of his house announces that fact. When she has attained the proper age the jar is laid on its side, with the top toward the street.

The Costliest Bean on Earth.

It is not generally known that the vanilla bean is the costliest bean on earth. It grows wild and is gathered by the natives in Papantia and Misantla, Mexico. When brought from the forests these beans are sold at the rate of \$12 per 1000, but when dried and cured they cost about \$12 per pound. They are mainly used by druggists, and last year over 90,000,000 were imported into the United States.

SCIENTIFIC SCRAPS.

Nearly all skin diseases are supposed to be caused by microscopic insects.

The heart of an adult horse beats 30 to 40 times a minute, of an ox 45 to 50, of a pig 70 to 80, and of a sheep 70 to 80 times.

An inch of rain falling upon an area of one square mile is equivalent to nearly 17,500,000 gallons, weighing 145,250,000 pounds, or 64,844 tons.

Chemists have extracted from coal-tar sixteen shades of blue, sixteen of yellow, twelve of orange, nine of violet, besides shades of other colors too numerous to mention.

Professor Richey of Paris, France, has found that the mind can act as many as a thousand times a second; for instance that it can distinguish that number of separate touches upon the skin.

The tongues of the cat family are covered with recurring spines. In the common domestic cat these are small, but sufficiently well developed to give the tongue a feeling of roughness. But in the lion and tiger the spines are strong enough to enable the animal to tear away the skin of a man's hand merely by licking it.

By means of a photograph made with a vibrating lens, Mr. F. H. Glew of London has calculated the time of a lightning-flash. It comes out one-nineteenth of a second. The calculation is based upon the multiple image in the photographs and the rate of vibration of the lens. The time applies, of course, only to the particular flash that was photographed.

A STUDY OF BRAINS.

Their Weight Bears No Relation to the Possessor's Ability.

And now a scientist stands ready to prove to us that the weight of the brain bears little or no relation to the ability of its possessor. The brains of two idiots weighed respectively 57.5 and 59.5 ounces, while those of Gambetta weighed less than that of the average boy of seven. A weak-minded man had a brain weighing 70.5, while a dwarfed Indian squaw possessed one of 73.6 ounces.

To the present generation these statements may be more or less matters of indifference, but the writer of this paragraph remembers when one of the greatest arguments used against the higher education of women was based on the fact that their brains weighed less than those of men. A brain of little weight was not considered worth cultivating. Its very lightness proved it to be unequal to the physical task of acquiring knowledge mastered by men whose brains weighed more. It was like expecting puny muscles to perform feats accomplished by athletic giants.

These arguments were considered unanswerable in their day. Every skeptical and fortunate young man quoted them to every ambitious and hampered young woman. They meant, alas, the self-depreciation of many a woman who gave up the struggle. And possibly it was just because the valiant promoters of higher education made no attempt to answer them, but went quietly and silently to work along the lines of their own beliefs, doing without argument the things which their opponents were arguing so ably against, that women of today enjoy manifold privileges denied to their elders. Everything and nothing can be proved by argument; the unanswerable fact lies alone in accomplishment.

The heaviest brains are found in cold northern countries, the highest average is obtained in Scotland, so that between the weight of the brain and the question of nationality a very decided relation may be said to exist.—Harper's Bazar.

The Professional Burglar.

The professional burglars belong to a special class, stereotyped and exclusive, forming a community of their own. These men take a peculiar pride in their "profession," and a certain amount of union exists between its members. If a burglar is in trouble his friends will pay for his defence, though they are not above betraying each other occasionally if circumstances require it. The receiver of stolen goods works hand in hand with these men, and without them the profits of the robberies would be small. It is difficult to state as to how far the love of excitement and adventure instigates the burglar to crime, but that it plays an important part of this there can be no doubt. To creep along housetops in the dark, to mount ladders and lay wire traps for the upsetting of inmates should they run out to give an alarm, to screw up the doors of dressing rooms and tamper with domestics—all these pursuits doubtless have their fascination for the criminal mind.—Gentleman's Magazine.

Fought a Wildcat in Water.

Billy Sweetman of Red Rock, a noted fisherman and hunter, while crossing the Susquehanna river in a boat a few days ago, saw a wildcat swimming across the rifts ahead of him. Without stopping to think, Sweetman cast a line toward the animal, but the next instant he regretted it. The hook caught in the animal's ears, and it at once turned and swam toward the boat. Sweetman paddled away, but the cat proceeded to climb on the head with the paddle, and the movement capsize the boat. There was a brief fight in the water. The fisherman defended himself so well with the paddle that he was able to reach the shore. The wildcat followed, but a few well-directed blows finished it. Sweetman lost his fishing outfit. The skin of the wildcat will bring him fifty cents.—New York Press.