

BEHIND THE VELVET CURTAIN.

[Ramsay Morris in News-Journal.]
[CHOPIN—OPUS 34.]

A dreamy quiet, a firelit room,
Two cups of coffee whose rich perfume
Steals over our senses while fancy flies
To Indian isles and castles of skies;
A heavy languor, a full content,
Odors of rose and violet blend
With faint patchouli and saw-mown hay,
A memory sweet of meadows gay.

On a bearskin rug I lie at ease
And listen to wondrous harmonies
As they softly drift, with charm untold,
Through the velvet portiere's sweeping fold.
The music's passion is rich and strong;
It holds me captive, I'm awayed at will
By the master's subtle grace and skill.

My eyes are raised with movement low
To where, on a slumberous divan low,
I see you stretched so near the place
That your soft breath fans my eager face.
The firelight gleams on your silken hair,
And kisses the brow so passing fair,
While I look on you with jealous glance
As o'er your cheek the shadows dance.

I try in vain to study your mind,
To read the thoughts which lie behind
Those deep gray orbs, to fathom the soul,
And find the power which holds control
Of my every sense, my every aim,
Which binds me a slave with unasked claim,
And makes me follow whither you lead,
Your life the all which my life doth need.

But the eyes no sign will e'er confess,
And the lips will tell me even less,
But when they quiver, or break into cry,
My own respond with answering sigh:
Oh, why should we hold our lives apart?
I cannot cry down my hungry heart,
Better defy the harsh world's decrees,
And shape a new path for you and me.

The music's dying; its charms yet thrill
My soul with a yearning intense and chill.
I creep still nearer, save that which
Till my hands touch those I long to own.
A lingering murmur, a haunting strain,
Which fades, bursts forth, and fades again;
The waltz is over, its last note dies,
But safe on my breast your dear head lies.

CHINESE ALMANACS.

Elaborate System of Distribution Throughout the Empire.

[San Francisco Examiner.]

All the Chinese almanacs are printed in Peking, and are distributed in the following manner: On a certain day appointed for the ceremony, which takes place in the capital, the mandarins (high imperial officials) repair early in the morning to the palace, and the members of the board, arrayed in their state dresses, proceed to their hall to escort the books, which are carried in procession to the imperial palace. These books are intended for the emperor, the empress and the queens are bound in yellow satin and inclosed in bags of cloth of gold. They are placed on a large gilded machine, borne by about forty footmen, clothed in yellow. Next follow ten or twelve smaller vehicles, surrounded with red curtains and containing the books for the princes. These are bound in red satin, and are inclosed in bags of silver cloth. These are followed by men bearing on their shoulders several tables on which are piled the calendars intended for the grandees of the court and the generals of the army. The cavalcade is completed by the president and members of the board, carried in sedan chairs, and they are followed by their usual attendants.

On arriving at the palace the golden bags are laid out on two tables, covered with yellow damask, when the members of the tribunal, having first prostrated themselves, deliver them to the proper officers, who receive them kneeling and carry them with great ceremony to the office of the throne. The silver bags are sent in a similar manner to all the princes of the royal family, after which the mandarins and other great officers of state present themselves in turn and kneel with reverence to receive their almanacs, which are regarded as gifts from the emperor. The ceremonies of distribution at the court being concluded, the books for the use of the people are sent by the mail into every province of the empire, where the forms observed at the imperial palace are repeated at the court of the head mandarin, after which the people are allowed to purchase their almanacs; and as this is a privilege of which few omit to avail themselves, the sale is immense and adds yearly thousands of dollars to the revenue.

Governor Groome's Pluck.

[Inter Ocean.]

The following story is told of Senator Groome, of Maryland: When he was governor he ran up frequently from Annapolis to Baltimore. One evening, just as the train approached a station half way between the two cities, Groome noticed a large crowd standing near the station; they seemed very much excited. When the train reached the station Groome saw a colored man tightly held by two nervous-looking white men, while the crowd looked on with interest. Groome jumped off as soon as the train stopped. The nervous-looking white man told him that they were peace officers, and that the negro was a murderer, and that the crowd were lynchers. Groome ordered the officers and their prisoner on the train; told the lynchers that he was the governor of Maryland and that they would stop him at their peril, and then, getting on the train, forced the negro through the cars up to the engine. Putting the prisoner, now half dead with fright, in the cab, he ordered the engineer to cut loose the engine and run back to Annapolis. This the engineer did, leaving the crowd howling in the rear. At Annapolis the governor turned the prisoner over to the sheriff and then returned to Baltimore. I am sorry to say that three nights after that the lynchers came into Annapolis, took the negro out of jail and hanged him. All the same, Groome is a plucky man.

The Home of Little Nell.

[Chicago Journal.]

Crowds of sympathetic visitors are surrounding the home of Little Nell in London, which is soon to be demolished. There is some doubt as to the authenticity of this "Old Curiosity Shop," but that does not affect the sentimentalists, and especially the Americans. "They went there to worship," a neighboring shop-keeper said, "took off their hats when they got through the doorway, and asked questions about Quilp and the Grandfather as if they had been actual persons. The ladies were the worst. I have known them to get down on their knees and burst out crying about Little Nell." Miss Mary Anderson might have been seen there more than once, with her heart full of tenderness for the little maiden; and so delighted was the fair American with the ancient dwelling and its overhanging story that the doors of the Lyceum were opened to the fortunate occupant whenever he chose to go.

Disgracing His Family.

[Norristown Herald.]

Mr. Huribert formerly editor of The New York World, is in England, where he is going to marry a duchess. It seems that after a man has written editorials for a New York paper he becomes hardened and reckless, and loses his self-respect, and is willing to—er—to still further disgrace his family.

The pawnbroker always takes a good interest in his business.

TAKING A PILL.

The Various Methods Which Are Recommended by the Family Medical Board.

[Middletown Transcript.]

When a pill comes within the charmed circle of a person's teeth the throat kicks. It puts up the shutter and closes the door. It apparently desires to go out of business. This same throat may take in chunks of unchewed beefsteak as big as Sicilian nuts, and other stores for the interior department by the side of which a pill of the largest growth would seem an insignificant affair, but it draws the line at pills. It shuts up shop and says to you just as plainly as can be, "You don't send any pills past me if I know it." This action of the human throat in the matter of pills is very curious and mystifying to the ordinary mind, and we wonder that Matthew Arnold and other great thinkers have not given it more attention and sought to make clearer for the rest of us the reason why the human throat is thus apparently so unreasonable.

You get about eleven or thirteen of these pills, big smooth fellows rolling about in some sort of a yellow powder, and you go home and take one of them according to the rules and regulations on the box. The whole family come into the room to see the performance, of course. They have taken pills in their time and they know there is something in a pill performance when they are spectators only. You probably say they are not going to have any foolishness with that pill; you are just going to swallow it right down and be done with it. Then you take a pill out of the box, open your mouth, hold your head back, drop in the pill and make seven or eight desperate swallows. The pill comes up smiling and with its yellow overcoat and a good deal of its high flavor worn off on your tongue, and you look a little dispirited.

Some one who has had a wider experience than the others with pills will tell you to try a swallow of water with it. All right. You're willing to take advice in this your hour of need. You drop the pill into your mouth again and hastily drink half a glass of water. Where is the pill now? Oh, it is snug enough down by the side of your tongue. It didn't go down with the freshest. It is not traveling by water this season. "Try some grated apple," suggests the person with the advice on tap. All right, being the grateful apple. You are willing by this time to try anything that promises to decide your throat to letting that pill through. It is covered nicely in the very center of a spoonful of grated apple, and with a weak sort of smile you throw your head back, put the contents of the spoon on your tongue, and swallow—all the grated apple. The pill lingers for an instant about the palate, as if it had forgotten the password, and then comes slowly up to the teeth, leaving a great deal of its individuality all along its track.

Now bread is suggested for a disguise for the pill. That is a good idea. Why didn't someone think of that before. You chew up a whole thought of bread, put the pill in the middle of it and make the greatest effort of your life in the way of a single swallow. But the result is not satisfactory. The bread goes right along according to schedule, but the pill is left on the sides and bed for further orders. By this time a good part, to your taste or a bad part of the pill is worn away, and you feel that you would know the rest of it by taste at any future time in your life. Further, there is the marks of bitterness and was and hatred of the inventor of the pill stamped plainly upon your countenance, and maybe your feelings are such that you cannot with seamliness express them in the bosom of your sympathizing family.

At last just as you are about to give up in despair, some one suggests that the pill be mashed up and clothed in jelly. That is the best idea yet. Why wasn't it thought of sooner? The pill is mashed and clothed in jelly and in a moment it has passed the guarded precincts of your interior department. It has gone at last, not in its original form, but as a broken package, and when you realize that the performance is over, your face lights up like that of the impatient man who, in the dead of winter, and at the driest hour of a mighty dry day, finds a 10-cent bit in the pocket of a long discarded vest. To many of us there is not much fun in taking a pill.

His Opera Was Grand.

[Arkansas Traveler.]

"On one occasion a great composer produced an opera which he hoped would be grand, but there was so much music in it, the singers did so well, and the audience went into such fits of rapture and spasms of enjoyment, that the composer saw his work doomed to a wayward life of inferior appreciation. After the performance he took the opera and sat up all night crossing out the music, and marking in rasp flats and guinea-ben-sharps. He went with high hope the next night to get a revise. The audience was restless. Men began to talk business. A harness and buggy dealer from a neighboring town, sold three buggies, two sets of harness, and figured extensively on an omnibus trade. Women drew their cloaks around their shoulders and shivered. The voices on the stage broke and fell in shattered fragments. The composer went away happy. His opera was grand."

"Did the people continue their patronage after the music was marked out and the opera pronounced grand?"

"Bless your ignorance, yes. Why the increase in attendance was wonderful. Previous to an opera's advent as grand—that is, before the music is crossed out—only people who really loved the 'concord of sweet sounds' went to see it, but afterwards it was alike to all. The man with the dullest ear enjoyed it the same as the person whose spirit was stirred by the gentle touch of soul-borne harmony."

Who Wants a Reliable Relic?

[Lime-Kiln Club.]

The keeper of the Bar-Traps and Sacred Relics, reported that he had received from Delaware another of the goose-quill pens used by John Hancock in signing the Declaration of Independence—making the seventh now in possession of the museum.

The president instructed the secretary to return thanks to the donor, but to drop a gentle hint at the same time that there was such a thing as being too good. John couldn't have written with over five or six pens at once, and the club will divide up on the goose-quill business with any respectable society short of relics.

Phillips as a Lecturer.

[Inter Ocean.]

In the olden time Wendell Phillips was in great demand as a lecturer. Among his stereotyped lectures to committees was, "I will come and lecture on a literary subject for \$100 a night and my expenses; in 'bliny' for nothing and pay my own expenses."

Rev. B. Franklin: Whoever will preach successfully to the American people, must be himself in sympathy with them.

"The bark went down," said the acute patient after he had swallowed a big dose of quinine.

THE LOG-CABIN CAMPAIGN.

INTERESTING REMINISCENCES OF THE FAMOUS HARD-CIDER CAMPAIGN.

Cor. Louisville Courier-Journal.

More than forty years have come and gone since the log-cabin, hard cider, and eon-skin campaign of 1840. This was a remarkable event in the history of our country. With clap-trap devices, Gen. Harrison was elected over Mr. Van Buren almost by acclamation, having carried nineteen states out of twenty-two.

Hon. Bailey Peyton, of Tennessee, called to see Gen. Harrison at North Bend, after he was nominated at Harrisburg, Pa. Peyton went to Cincinnati and made a speech; in this speech he said he had been to see the Whig nominee; that he was the man they wanted. He said he lived in a log-cabin, with the latch-string never pulled in, a barrel of hard cider to treat his friends, and coon skins nailed over the cracks in the walls to keep the wind away.

Old Joe Harrison (no kin to the general) owned the Six-mile house, below Cincinnati, where the United States flag had floated for forty years. This was the great resort for fast horses, tight men, and lively women. Joe saw a point and at once built the first log-cabin. This was the first; in a few weeks there were hundreds built all over the country.

On May 18 the whigs met at the Galt house to make arrangements to build a log cabin. In a short time plenty of funds were raised for the purpose.

Col. John O. Cochran, chief marshal; George D. Prentice, of The Journal; Birney Marshall, of The Gazette, assistant marshals; George L. Robards and James McDonald, architects and builders. William O'Hara's band was in attendance. It consisted of 'drums and fifes, four horns and two bass, two hundred boys with as many axes. Each appointed himself a committee of one. With twenty teams we left the city, proceeded down Jefferson street, then south to Broadway, into Bullitt's woods. We cut twenty trees. With ox and horse teams to haul them, the line of march was one mile long. We brought the whole tree and cut it up at the place where Rufer's hotel now stands. This was one of the jolliest days of the "Falls City." There were all sorts of people there, from the highest to the lowest, and all seemed to take a hand in the log cabin. It seemed to me that hard cider was quite strong, for many of the boys fell at the first fire, and by the wayside, but there was not any quarreling.

Birney Marshall and Hiram Ray led the van, each with a long pole, driving old Meeks' ox team, Bill O'Hara with his band of fife and drum—I would like to see such a band to-day. The dust was two inches deep, and when the van were reaching the city you would have thought it was Birnam woods moving on Maebeth's castle, as every Whig carried a glue bush. At the setting sun our cabin was finished, and in the presence of 5,000 people Gov. Poindexter and Charles M. Thurston made the first log-cabin speeches. Prof. Candy and T. Tyler too, set all the people wild. I thought, good-by, Mattie (as Old Hickory called Van Buren). I said hear it not at the Hermitage, old hero. The air became full of the sounds of the different glee songs, composed by Prof. Candy. The woods resounded with songs of birds and the voices of the women and children. Those glee songs had more power over the mind than the gospel song of to-day has in the churches. There was something in this remarkable campaign of 1840 that was permanent—the good feeling one party had for the other; there being but few homicides, if any; certainly was few to make a president in that way. In 1844 the same claptrap was tried, but it was stale, flat and unprofitable. Mr. Clay was defeated by Polk.

The Cincinnati Mail-line steamer gave out that she would leave our wharf on the Fourth of July, 1840, then on the 5th leave Cincinnati at 12 o'clock and lay over at North Bend four hours to let the passengers see Gen. Harrison and his log-cabin. Men, women, and children made the trip. About four hundred yards from the landing was the old-fashioned two-story frame house with some old out-houses attached, but all clean and neat. The general was there, as well as Mrs. Harrison, his son Scott, and several members of the family. The general felt flattered at so large a concourse of people calling on him at one time. Here was an infirm old man living on borrowed time, nothing but a walking shadow, low, weak, and emaciated, bloodshot eyes, and looked careworn and excited. The question of his friends and acquaintances was: Has he vitality enough to live through this excitable campaign? The general took care to stay at home until the election was over, and see but few visitors.

Gen. Harrison was a pure minded man; he was the governor and commander of the northwest. He certainly was not a great man, but he had greatness thrust upon him—the presidency of the United States, almost by one voice. When he was nominated for the presidency he was clerk of Hamilton county court. The good man had not strength enough to bear his honors, but bore up until after he was inaugurated, and five weeks later he yielded up his spirit and appeared before a higher tribunal.

A WHOLE TON OF COMFORT.

Merchant Traveler.

A tramp who had been hired by a circus to appear as an Oriental knight in the cavalcade fell from grace and once more resumed his ancient calling. "Hello," said a man, meeting him one day, "I thought you were circulating."

"No, but I've quit."

"Was you like this business as well as the circus?"

"Well, I don't know. I may not be so awful durn gorgeous as I was, but I don't have to wash every day and change my clothes, and there's a whole ton of satisfied comfort in that, even if I don't look quite as purty as an Oriental knight."

DEALING IN NAMES.

Lists of Invalids and Dupes Bring the Highest Price.

The Traffic in Exchanging Names of Likely Customers in Various Reputable Lines—Letters to Quack Doctors.

[New York Letter.]

A pleasant, gray-bearded gentleman sat in a Sixth avenue elevated train, talking to a younger man. A reference to the occupation of the elder man made him say: "Mine is an unusual business. See here." He pulled out a card. If his name had been Henry Jackson, the card would have read: "Henry Jackson, Dealer in Names." "Won't you explain?" said the younger man. "I buy and sell the addresses of people in all parts of the United States and Canada. There are hundreds of business men who reach their customers by circulars, as well as by advertising in the newspapers. Thus a book publisher gets out a new book which he wants to sell through agents. He is anxious to learn the names and addresses of all the men and women in the United States who sell subscription books. He also wants the names of those who sell other goods in the same way because they are very likely to drop the other article for the sake of the new book. Then he wants the addresses of the people who never acted as agents, but who want to buy it to see what they can do. He advertises for agents in a variety of papers, and at a pretty heavy expense. It costs him several cents for every letter of inquiry about his book that he receives. To that letter of inquiry he sends his elaborate circulars. I come to the relief of the publisher by selling him a very large number of agents' addresses at a small part of the cost of getting them by advertising."

"How do you get them?"

"You see every publisher has a list of agents whom he has employed at one time and another. Nearly every one will sell me a copy of his list for a consideration. The combined copies make a formidable pile of manuscript. Then there are the novelty men, who accumulate large lists of names of agents. Agents form one line of special names. Invalids form another."

"Do you mean sick people?"

"Not necessarily. The community has a lot of people who are always buying medicines. They are the most valuable lot an advertiser can reach. The consumption remedy circular gives them a backing cough and a hectic flush. The blood purifier circular flashes them with eczema. So it goes through the list of chronic and acute ills that flesh is heir to. They will buy anything from beef and bark to a steam atomizer to doctor a sprained foot. All these people at one time or another write to some advertising doctor or venditor of the elixir of life. I buy the names from the advertisers, classify them according to the number of times the names have been used by medical men and the last diseases that afflicted the writers, and sell them over and over again. Sometimes I sell the original letters outright. The careful advertiser sometimes varies the character of the circular sent according to the characteristics of the letter writer, even writing a personal letter in some cases."

"When other classes have you?"

"Two general classes. One for the sharpers and one for the general advertiser. The latter class is cosmopolitan. It includes all others, really, but is made up mostly of farmers. For instance in New York, Rochester and Detroit are several firms of dealers in garden and farm seeds. They get hundreds of thousands of letters every year. To those addresses circulars for all kinds of farm and household goods, books, jewelry, anything that a man or woman doesn't need but is sure to want, can be sent with great profit. The names for the use of sharpers are the most profitable of all, and yield the largest returns to all concerned, except to the ones addressed. Once we get a name on that list we know it will pan out till the man dies. The addresses of all people who buy tickets in lotteries, who write to dealers in face-simile greenbacks, and who write to other advertisers that offer to give something for nothing, are very carefully arranged by themselves. They are usually very smart in their own conceit, but they nibble at a bare buck."

"What prices do these names bring?"

"I have got as high as \$25 a thousand for names for sharpers' use. Good lists of habitual invalids are worth all the way from \$10 to \$20 a thousand. Agents are so easily obtained that \$10 is a big price; from \$3 to \$5 is ordinary. General-use lists copied off the letters bring from \$3 to \$5 when they have not been mailed to more than twice. When they do not exceed that, and where a year or two old they get down to \$1 a thousand."

"Are many in this business of yours?"

"Not continuously. They drop in, make a good thing, and straightway begin mailing circulars on their own account. The number of actual addresses handled by me in one year has never exceeded 1,000,000, but it has crowded that figure closely."

Belling Bad Boys.

[Austin, Tex. Press.]

Owing to the tendency of our young Austin boys to gravitate toward hoodlumism after dark, the board of commissioners concluded to make them go home at night, and not run the streets any more. A town ordinance was accordingly passed to that effect, and now from the tower of the hall of Eagle Engine Company No. 3 rings aloud the curfew bell every evening at 8 o'clock, giving just eight taps as a warning for the boys to vanish homeward or be arrested.

"Where's the racket for that, won't you be so kindly, but judiciously, knowing that the boys are police force stood ready and watching to gobble them up unless they could show authoritative permission from parents or guardians, or that they were on errands, or in the discharge of some legitimate duty. At all public entertainments, especially theatrical, these boys have been a very serious source of annoyance to both performers and audience, crowding the back seats and entry, and driving people wild with their yells, shrieks, whistling, and stamping. It had to be stopped."

Growth of the Nails.

Dr. Beau, a French physician, has observed that the finger-nails grow at the rate of one-thirtieth of an inch a week, while the toenails increase in length only one-fourth as fast. He says that the growth of the thumb-nail equals its own length every twenty weeks, but the nail of the great toe is replaced completely only once in ninety-six weeks.

The Cat Socially.

[London News.]

"Man has sought the society of the cat, it is not the cat that has sought the society of man," says Champfleury. It is a natural, comfortable, selfish, independent animal, and probably its society is valued because it is so obviously and unaffectedly makes the best of this life without pretending to any enthusiasm for humanity.

When the territory of the United States is as densely settled as that of France there will be 680,000 people here.

CAUGHT IN HIS OWN TRAP.

AN OLD FARMER WHO "DIDN'T HANKER AFTER THE ANIMAL" HE BOUGHT.

New York Dispatch.

Elizur Coles is one of the wealthiest and by far the meanest farmer in the southern portion of the Green mountain state, and it is not in the memory of man that he ever had the worst of a bargain. Indeed, it was well known that he would resort to any trick or subterfuge to save a dollar. His neighbors fought shy of him for that reason. He was remarkably fond of horseflesh and a good judge, withal, priding himself on driving the best team for miles around. They were certainly a handsome pair, of a creamy white, which was only marred—or rendered odd, according to taste—by a black spot on each of their foreheads. It was their wonderful similarity that made the pair so valuable. Even their owner could scarcely tell one from the other.

Some time ago one of them was taken with the staggers, and before Coles could get a veterinary surgeon it died. The old man was terribly cut up at this misfortune, which elicited no sympathy from his neighbors, who said it was a judgment on him for his avarice and general obnoxiousness.

Coles attended all the horse fairs and sales that were advertised, seeking in vain for a new match for his remaining treasure, which seemed to be ailing through fretting for its mate. One day he was returning home in a disconsolate mood, having been unsuccessful for the twentieth time or more, and was landing from the railroad station, when he came upon a man who had the cut of a jockey, lying on the grassy path, while a few feet distant from him was a white horse, hitched by a rope to the fence.

He glanced at the man, who seemed oblivious to surroundings, and then walked up to the horse and examined it.

"It's a pretty crittur," he said. "If I'd only got a black spot on the nose, it'd match Snowdrop justly."

He looked at the man again. Then at the horse, wistfully, scratched his head and thought a bit.

"The devil had never quite led him to defy the law. But for legal consequences he would have cut the rope that fastened the animal and appropriated it."

"Wonder if he'd sell," he said to himself. "Maybe I'll never quite match Snowdrop. I may never hit such a chance again."

He gave the man a shove with a "Hallo, neighbor."

The man looked up lazily. He had been half asleep.

"Your hoss?"

"I reckon."

"What you be agoin', neighbor?"

"Bluestone fair."

"To sell?"

"Yes, old man, 'less you want to buy."

"Wal," replied the sly old fox, "I don't hanker arter the animal, but if your price ain't too stiff 'p'raps I mought."

Then, noticing that the man was a little "on," he invited him to a neighboring store, where he plied him with whiskey, finally striking a bargain largely in his favor, inasmuch as he knew the horse was worth more than thrice the hundred dollars he paid for it.

Then for fear that its late owner might sober up and repent of his bargain, he mounted the horse and galloped home, chucking at his sharp practice.

Arrived at the farm, he put the horse in a stable by itself and went in to supper, his poor, ill-used wife wondering what made the usually morose fellow so merry.

As he went in to examine his stock, he was met by his hired man, who looked weary and forlorn.

"Wal, Tom, what's been doin' since I was away?"

"Somethin' dreadful, boss!"

"What'd ye mean? Speak out, man!"

"Snowdrop's been stolen!"

Words could not describe the old man's fury. When he quieted down a little he exhibited his new purchase to his man, who walked round and round the horse in bewilderment. Finally, after a rigorous inspection, he swore that it was Snowdrop.

"Snowdrop had a black spot on its forehead, fool!" roared his master.

"So's this un!" cried Tom, triumphantly, as with a rag saturated with turpentine he washed off a patch of white paint that had hidden Snowdrop's black spot.

Farmer Coles at once took to his bed. That hundred dollars will be the death of him. Besides, he had to give Tom something to keep things quiet.

"KOLA" BETTER THAN COFFEE.

New York Sun.

The kola nut, largely used in tropical Africa to make an invigorating beverage, was subjected some months ago to careful analysis, and is found to be richer in caffeine than the best coffee, while containing also the same active principle as cacao. Negroes are said not to touch coffee when they can obtain this nut. It is said by a Dr. Daniell to be growing into an important article of commerce in the Soudan, and, it is thought, will soon find its way into European countries. Samples have been sent to London medical men for experiment and to planters for agricultural purposes. It is believed to aid digestion and to render people capable of withstanding the depression consequent upon prolonged labor. Others claim for it the power to relieve mental depression and to not only subdue the craving for alcohol, but prevent its intoxicating effects.

THE SWISS IN WISCONSIN.

Texas Sittings.

New Glarus is a Swiss settlement in Wisconsin. It was founded in 1845 by 108 persons, and now has 4,000, who hold fast to the integrity in race, language and customs. The original purchase consisted of two square miles. At the outset notice was given in their Switzerland home that every man who made his way to the colony should have a farm of twenty-two acres, rent free for ten years, and then absolute ownership at once.

THE PERILS OF HOME.

Accident Insurance Most Required by Those Who Never Travel.

Mark Twain.]

Startling Discoveries Made by a Suspicious Individual While Delving Among Statistical Facts and Figures.

The man in the ticket office said: "Have an accident insurance ticket, also?"

"No," I said, after studying the matter over a little. "No, I believe not; I am going to be traveling by rail all day to-day. However, to-morrow I don't travel. Give me one for to-morrow."

The man looked puzzled. He said: "But it is for accident insurance, and if you are going to travel by rail—"

"If I am going to travel by rail, I sha'n't need it. Lying at home in bed is the thing I am afraid of."

I had been looking into this matter. Last year I traveled 30,000 miles, almost entirely by rail; the year before, I traveled over 25,000 miles, half by sea and half by rail; and the year before that I traveled in the neighborhood of 10,000 miles, exclusively by rail. I suppose if I put in all the little odd journeys here and there, I may say I have traveled 60,000 miles during the three years I have mentioned. And never an accident.

For a good while I said to myself every morning: "Now I have escaped thus far, and so the chances are just that much increased that I shall catch it this time. I will be shrewd, and buy an accident ticket." And to a dead moral certainty I drew a blank, and went to bed that night without a joint started or a bone splintered. I got tired of that sort of daily bother, and fell to buying accident tickets that were good for a month. I said to myself, "A man can't buy thirty blanks in one bundle."

But I was mistaken. There was never a prize in the lot. I could read of railway accidents every day—the newspaper atmosphere was foggy with them; but somehow they never came my way. I found I had spent a good deal of money in the accident business, and had nothing to show for it. My suspicions were aroused, and I began to hunt around for somebody that had won in this lottery. I found plenty of people who had invested, but not an individual that had ever had an accident or made a cent. I stopped buying accident tickets and went to ciphering. The result was astounding. The peril lay not in traveling, but in staying at home.

I hunted up statistics and was amazed to find that after all the glaring newspaper readings concerning railroad disasters, less than 300 people had really lost their lives by those disasters in the preceding twelve months. The Erie road was down as the most murderous in the list. It had killed forty-six or twenty-five, I do not exactly remember which, but I know the number was double that of any other road. But the fact straightway suggested itself that the Erie was an immensely long road, and did more business than any other line in the country; so the double number of killed ceased to be a matter for surprise.

By further figuring it appeared that between New York and Rochester the Erie ran eight passenger trains each way every day—sixteen altogether—and carried a daily average of 6,000 persons. That is about 1,000,000 in six months, the population of New York city. Well, the Erie kills from thirteen to twenty-three persons out of its 1,000,000 of six months; and in the same time 13,000 out of New York's 1,000,000 died in their beds! My flesh creeps; my hair stood on end. "This is appalling," I said. "The danger isn't in traveling by rail, but in trusting to those deadly beds. I will never sleep in a bed again."

I had figured on considerably less than one-half the length of the Erie road. It was plain that the entire road must transport at least 11,000 or 12,000 people every day. There are many short roads running out of Boston that do fully half as much; a great many such roads. There are many roads scattered about the Union that do a prodigious passenger business, therefore it was not to be presumed that an average of 2,500 passengers a day for each road in the country would be about correct. There are 846 railway lines in our country, and 846 times 2,500 are 2,115,000. So the railways of America move more than 2,000,000 of people every day—650,000,000 of people a year, without counting the Sundays. They do that, too—there is no question about it—though they get the raw material is clear beyond the jurisdiction of my arithmetic; for I have hunted the census through and I find that there are not that many people in the United States by a matter of 610,000,000 at the very least. They must use some of the same people over again, likely.

San Francisco is one-eighth as populous as New York; there are sixty deaths a week in the former and 509 a week in the latter—if they have luck. That is 3,120 deaths a year in San Francisco, and eight times as many in New York—say about 25,000 or 26,000. The health of the two places is the same. So we will let it stand as a fair presumption that this will hold good all over the country, and that consequently 25,000 of every 1,000,000 people we have must die every year. That amounts to one-fortieth of our total population. One million of us, then, die annually. Out of this 1,000,000 of us, 10,000 or 12,000 are stabbed, shot, drowned, hanged, poisoned, or meet a similar violent death in some other popular way, such as perishing by kerosene lamp or coal-kirt configurations, getting buried in hop-mines, falling off house-tops, beaking through church or lecture-room floors, taking patent medicines, or committing suicide in other forms. The Erie railroad kills from twenty-three to forty-six; the other 846 railroads kill an average of one-third of a man each; and the rest of that 1,000,000, amounting in the aggregate to the appalling figure of 887,731 corpses, die naturally in their beds.

You will excuse me from taking any more chances on those beds. The railroads are good enough for me.

And my advice to all people is: Don't stay at home any more than you can help; but when you have got to stay at home a while, buy a package of those insurance tickets and sit up nights. You cannot be too cautious.

[One can see now why I answered that ticket agent in the manner recorded at the top of this sketch.]

The moral of this composition is, that thoughtless people grumble more than is fair about railroad management in the United States. When we consider that every day and night of the year full 14,000 railway trains of various kinds, freighted with life and armed with death, go thundering over the land, the marvel is not that they kill 300 human beings in a twelvemonth but that they do not kill 300 times 300.

Those who have never seen the much-talked-of dynamite explosive will be interested to know that it looks much like moist brown sugar.