

The Postman Palace

By Joyce Suttin

It was a simple, mundane life, the life of Ferdinand Cheval. He was born in 1836 in a village southeast of Lyon, France, where he attended school for only six years until he was

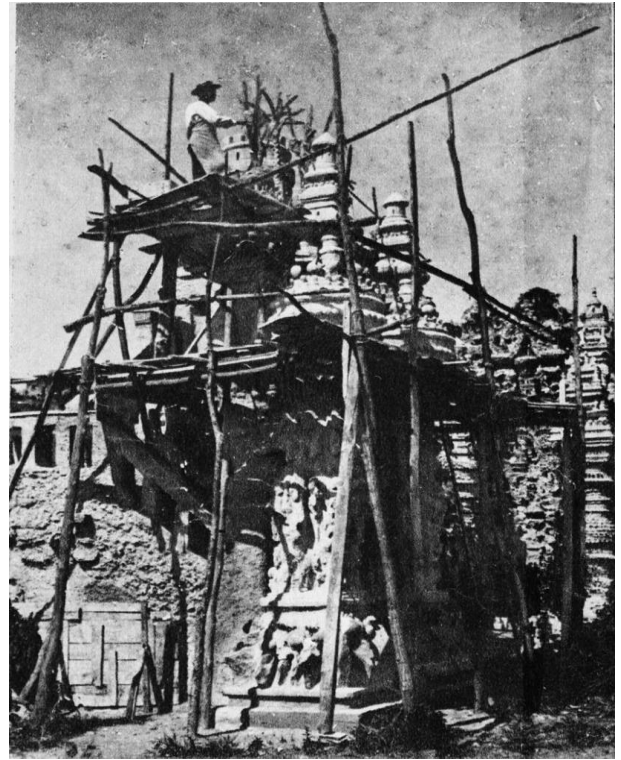
orphaned as a young teenager.

Throughout his life he worked as a farmer, a baker, and finally a postman. In 1869, he requested and obtained a route known as the Tournée de Tersanne, delivering and picking up mail in the villages around Hauterives. He remained there until retirement, walking the 33 km (20 mile) route daily over 10,000 times.

https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferdinand_Cheval

One day, at the age of 43, he stumbled over a uniquely shaped stone. In his words: "I was walking very fast when my foot caught on something that sent me stumbling a few meters away. I wanted to know the cause. In a dream I had built a palace, a castle or caves, I cannot express it well... I told no one about it for fear of being ridiculed and I felt ridiculous myself. Then fifteen years later, when I had almost forgotten my dream, when I wasn't thinking of it at all, my foot reminded me of it. My foot tripped on a stone that almost made me fall. I wanted to know what it was... It was a stone of such a strange shape that I put it in my pocket to admire it at my ease. The next day, I went back to the same place. I found more stones, even more beautiful, I gathered them together on the spot and was overcome with delight."1

From then on, each day while walking his route, Ferdinand set aside stones, which he collected on his way home, and with them, he began to construct his palace, which he called Palais idéal. Night after night, stone by stone, he worked to construct the marvelous building, complete with arches, turrets, and ornate columns.



In 1896, Ferdinand retired and was able to devote himself entirely to his passion. In 1912, after 33 years of labor, and at the age of 77, he completed the palace. But Ferdinand wasn't done. He began work on an elaborate mausoleum, which took him another eight years and was completed when he was 86.

If you feel your life is mundane as you slowly trek the long miles through your days, remember the postman's vision of a Palais idéal and **the simple painstaking labor of building a dream pebble by pebble, stone by stone.** You never know what amazing results might come from tripping over an odd stone along your way. **If you use those stumbling blocks as stepping stones, you just might create something amazing.**

