RENAN'S REMINISCENCES

M. Ronan tells us that it was not until late in life that he began to have any reminiscences. His early years were so completely engrossed with the solution of the highest problems of religion and philosophy, not as mere matters of speculative interest, but as subjects of the most vital and absorbing importance, that he had not a moment to look backwards. Later, the present preoccupied him too entirely to remember that he had a past. When he emerged from the tranquil retirement and scholastic atmosphere of Saint-Sulpice, and found himself face to face with the swift current of brilliant contemporary life in Paris, the transition occupied every mental faculty i it was passing from the cool shade of the cloister to the full glare of ucon, and at first his eyes were dazzled by the suddenness of the change. Then the burning suns of Syria and the rocky hills of Galilee, and the great facts associated with them, banished all memory of the lonely coast of Brittany. But, if recollection was slow in coming, it came at last, and hterndantly enough; and the past seemed all the more poetic that it was so far off and had been so long forgotten. M. Rénan seems to have been an interesting psychological problem to himself as well as to his contemporaries, and he takes the greatest pains to account for him-self, phenomenally, with an egotism which is so frank and impersonal, and takes the public interest so entirely for granted, that it cannot offend. And he is not wrong in supposing that the mental history of a man who has been for so long a conspicuous object in the eyes of the world, will be read with interest, even by those

to whom he is hardly more than one of the great names of literature. Of all parts of France, Brittany has, perhaps, the most poetic charm and the most distinctive character, and in the hands of such a master of the picturesque as M. Renan it is not likely to lose any romantic features. Though France does not extend from extreme north to south over more than eight degrees of latitude, the contrast between "Thomme die midi," as Dautlet describes him, and the dweller on the rocky coast of Brittany, is as great as if they belonged to different nationalities, as by descent they undoubtedly do. These opposing elements of the Celtic and Latin stock account for many of the inconsistencies and incongruities of French history. The steadfast, loyal, heroic type of the North, with its poetic melancholy, its noble scorn of gain and vulgar aims, its passionate attachment to favorite ideals, is entirely at variance with the brilliant, light-hearted, impe-tuous race of the South, irresponsible, merry, and easily moved, with little power of concen-tration and an absorbing love of novelty. It is from this line, old Breton stock that Rénan is descended on his father's side. The pedigree is Imposing. About the year 480, the clan of the Rénaus came from Cardigan, under the conduct of Fragan, and settled on a vast farm, Keranbe-lec, on the banks of the Ledano. "There," says Renan, "they lived an obscure life for thirteen centuries, laying up a store of thoughts and sensations, the accumulated capital of which has fallen to me. I feel that I think for them, and they live in me. None of these honest people ever tried to "gaaigner," as the Nor-mans say, and so they all remained poor. They could do only two things, -- till the soil, or brave that rocky, stormy sea in their little boats. The unworldliness and practical incapacity of these worthy people pass all imagination. One proof of their nobleness is that, whenever they attempted anything like a business transaction, they were invariably cheated. Never, since the world began, did people ruin them-selves with such eagerness, such impetuosity, such gayety. It was a running fire of practical paradoxes and amusing fancies. I once asked my mother if all the members of our family that she had known were as refractory to fortune as those that I had seen. "All as poor as Joh," she replied; "how else could it have been? None of them were born rich, and none of them pillaged or plundered. Some people are born to be rich, and some will never be. You must have claws, and help yourself first; but that we never could do. As soon as it came to taking the best piece in the dish as it passed, our natural politeness rebelled. None of your forefathers made any money; your grandfather would not buy the confiscated lands, like the rest of the world, and your father was like all He had no idea of business, which showed that he was born to sail and to fight. When you came into the world, we were so sad that I took you on my knees and wept bitterly. Sailors are not like other people. I have seen some, who, before they went into action, had large aums of money. They invented an odd amusement. They heated the coins in a pan, and then threw them into the street, hughing heartily at the efforts of the crowd to pick them up. It was their way of showing that they were not going to have their heads shot off for six-franc pieces, and that money was nothing in their eyes beside the bonor of serving the King. And your poor Uncle Pierre—he gave me worly enough, heaven knows." "Tell me about my uncle," I said; "I don't know why I am fond of him." "He was the kindest creature under the sun ; but he never could be made to work. He was always in the highways and byways, spending his days and nights in taverns, and yet he was so pleasant; but it was impossible to steady him. You can't imagine how charming he was before the life he led had used him up. He was worshipped in the country-side, and they was to fight to have him. The proverbs.

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and tales, and funny stories, he knew were beyond belief. He was followed about from place to place, and was the life, and soul, and delight, of everytody. He had some education, and had read a great deal, and he made a real and had read a great deal, and no made a real literary revolution. Before his time, they only knew the "Four Sons of Aymon" and "Renaud de Montauban" They knew all those old characters, and had their lives by heart, and each man had his special hero. Pierre had newer stories, which he got from books, but which he adapted to the popular taste. We had a fair library then; but, when the mission fathers came under Charles X., the preacher gave such a beautiful discourse against danger-ous books that everybody burned all the volumes they had. The missionary said that it was better to burn too much than two little, and that under certain circumstances all books might be dangerous. So I did like the rest; but your father threw two or three on top of the old cupboard, saying: "These are too pretty." They were "Don Quixote," "Gil Blas," and "Le Diable Boiteux." Pierre unearthed these one day, and used to read them to the seamen. All our little library passed through his hands. In this way, he used up his small competence, and became a pure vagabond; but, for all that, he was kind and gentle, and would not have hurt a fly. What an imagination he had! Poor Pierre! he could be so charming. There were times when a word from him would make you die of laughing. I shall never forget the evening they came and told me that he had been found dead by the wayside. I went and had h m decently dressed. They buried him, and the cure said some very kind words to me about the fate of those vagabonds whose heart is not as far from God as one might suppose." It is not only in the little towns of Brittany that the world has a tenderness for pleasant worthless

This was the paternal ancestry. On the mother's side, there was a strain of cheerful Gascon blood to modify the dreamy Breton type. Madame Reman seems to have been worthy of her son, and of the loving, reverent affection he bestowed on her all through her life. In her family we have a glimpse of the substantial bourgeoists of the period. Her mother was a wound of marked energy and dignity of character, and great piety. She abhorred the Revolution, and concealed the proscribed clergy in her house. When there was public mourning for the treason of Dumouriez, she asked, in an ironical tone: "Ah. mon paucer Tanneguy, what is the matter (Has anything happened to my cousin Amélie! Is Augustine's rheumatism worse!" "No, cousin; the Republic is in danger!" "Oh, is that all! Ah, mon paucec Tanneguy, what a relief! What a weight you lift from my heart!" She managed to escape the guillotine, though one of her intimate friends fell under the axe. M. Rénan says that his beloved sister, Henriette, was strikingly like his grandmother, very different from his mother, whose character had much more lightness and guiety; and this is all that he can trust himself to say to the public of this sister who was so

very dear to him.
Tréguier was the birth-place of Rénan, a quiet, little town of North Brittany that was completely overpowered by the imposing mass of ts great cathedral, a beautiful specimen of the poetic architecture of the thirteenth century. "The long hours ! spent in its shadow," he " made a dreamer of me, and have been the cause of my complete practical incapacity. I early contracted an instinctive antipathy to the bourgeoisie which my teason has since succeeded in overcoming. When I went to Guingamp, a more secular town, where I had relations in the middle classes, I was uncomfortable and ill at ease. I was only happy when I could be with an old servant, to whom I could read stories. I longed to go back to my grave old town, with its overwhelming cathedral, a grand protest against all that is sordid and commonplace. I was not myself again till I had seen my high tower, the pointed nave, the cloister, and the tombs of the fifteenth century which lie there. I was more at home in the company o the dead, - beside those knights and noble ladies who sleep their quiet sleep with their hounds at their feet and their stone torches in their hands." Imagination, and scutiment, and poetic susceptibility, were early fostered to an almost morbid degree in the child, while all attempts at poetic expression were strictly for bidden by the priestly training of after years.

Rénan was a premature child, and so frail that for two months his life was despaired of. So many of the lights that have burned the most brightly, have been very feeble and unsteady flames at first. Old Gode, the vise woman of Treguer, came to his mother, and said that she had an unfailing means of knowing if he would live. She took one of his little shirts and went one morning to the sacred pool, and came back with a radiant face. live! he will live!" she said. Scarcely had the little shirt been thrown upon the water when it rose. Afterwards, when the old woman used to meet him, she would say, with shining eyes: Ah, if you could only have seen how the little

arms spread out ?" In this quiet spot, entirely shielded from the disintegrating influences of the modern world, Rénan's childhood was passed. These early surroundings, he says, gave a "pli" to his character which was never effaced. Steam was still unharnessed, and popular education yet afar off. The country was teeming with romantic legends, chiefly religious, and Britany had a whole legend of private saints of its own. The

country was dotted all over with rude little chapels, perched among the bare rocks, or stand-ing alone on the desolate, wind-swept heath, each containing an image of some local saint, carved with that mixture of realism and imagi-nation with which the ideas of a primitive people express themselves before art has become more than a symbol. Many of these saintly personages were once, doubtless, realities, and had been notorieties, and not always very edifying ones, in their day, and round their memories traditions had gathered. This irregular hagiology was looked upon with disfavour by the clergy; but it was too deeply rooted in the habits and affections of the people to be suppressed, and once a year all the chapels and shrines were visited, and frequent miracles were vouchsafed. All this was, of course, adapted to fascinate the imagination of a dreamy, impressible child; and in his lonely wanderings the little Renan would peep in through the ruined window of a solitary chapel, and, meeting the fierce eyes of the resident saint, turn and flee in

Rénan's early education was, of course, conducted by the clergy of the place; and of these, his first masters, he speaks with the deepest reverence and affection. They seem to have been truly excellent men, narrow and limited, been truly exertient men, harrow and "home," but entirely pure and good. "Among them," he says, "I have had the privilege of knowing absolute virtue." The education they gave comprised a fair amount of mathematics, a substanial, though not very scholarly, knowledge of Latin, and a thorough moral foundation which was never shaken in the mental pertubations of after years. Here and there are glimpses of the companions of his boyhood; a little friend, Guyomar, with whom he used to walk backwards and forwards from school, discussing the mathematical problems which interested them; a sweet little girl, Noémi, "a little model of goodness and grace," and as pretty as she was good. She was his favorite companion, as being delicate, thoughtful child, he preferred little girls to the more boisterous society of his own sex. She was two years older than her little friend, and, though always siding with him in efforts at peace-making, would say, with a smile: "Ernest, you will never succeed; you want to make everybody agree." She died, some years afterwards, under very sad circumstances; and Rénan named his daughter after her.

But memories like these are brief and scat-tered. M. Rénan is far more interested in tracing the influences that were at work in moulding his character, and analyzing the inherited ingredients of his nature, than in recall-ing the events of his boyhood. It is curious to observe how this preoccupied him. He takes the greatest pains to account for certain con-tradictory traits in his character,—to show how he came to, as one of his friends said, "think like a man, feel like a wooman, and act like a child." He thinks that his remarkable powers of historical criticism and intuition, "the essence of which is to be able to enter thoroughly into a mode of life not our own," are due to his having lived among a people who were almost as far from modern civilization as the inhabitants of Galilee and Samaria in the Days of John the Baptist. There is an exquisite sketch

"Le Broyeur de Lin," told by his mother
with the utmost grace and feeling,—introduced to illustrate certain traits in the Breton character, its ideality, its intensity, and the hold love can take upon it. There is no race, he tells us, where so many people actually die of love; they seldom commit suicide, but are consumed and wasted by a deep, overpowering sentiment, very different from the fierce, physical passion of the South. Such hold had the ideal side of existence taken of his nature, such was his scorn of merdeen of matth, though never definitely destined for the priesthood, no other career ever occurred to him as possible. This tranquil existence continued until 1836, when Renan was nearly sixteen. In that year he took all the prizes of his class; and, this coming to the notice of one of the agents who were re-cruiting for M. Dupanloup's new seminary, he has summoned, and suddenly transported to l'aris, where he says the transition was as great as if he had suddenly dropped there from Timbuctoo. E. M.

OUR CHESS COLUMN.

All communications intended for this Column should be addressed to the Chess Editor, Canadian Illustrated News, Montreal.

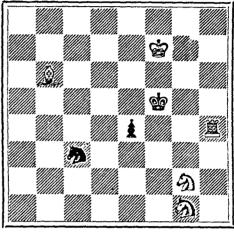
The excitement caused in England by the contests of the International Tourney, and the recent visit of the Prince and Princess of Wanes and their children to the grand military Chess Tournament in London, an account of which will be found annexed, are plain evidences of the fact that the noble game is obtaining much more of the attention of the public than it did years ago. How far this is going to lead to the pastime's becoming used by the great body of the people as a means of recreation, is another thing. No one will deny the importance of recreation, and the desire for it is so great that it will be obtained one way or the other. In England, the amusements of the great body of the people, a few years ago, were brutal and degrading, but the influence of societies, and the force of legal emeriments, have done much to repress them, and the results have been most beneficial. What is going to be presented as a substitute for that which was low and debasing? We do not suppose the time will ever come when a chessboard and men will be found in every dwelling, but we do know that the more they are adopted as a means of home amusement, the greater will be the benefit, not only to those who have arrived at middle ago, and beyond it, but also to the younger members of the family group, who will never rogret that they have been taught how to make a leisure hour pleasant and profitable.

CHESS WITH LIVING PIECES

CHESS WITH LIVING PIECES.

The Prince and Princess of Wales and their children, the Duchess of Edinburgh and the Duke and Duchess of Teck on Monday afternoon attended the grand military chess tournament, which was opened at the Cirque, Argyle street, Regent street, in aid of the funds of the Royal Hospital for Children and Women, Waterloo Bridge road, London, and the West End Hospital for Diseases of the Nervous System, Welheck street, London. When the royal Party had arrived, the juvenile pipers of the Royal Caledonian Asylum, in full Highland costume, marched into the ring forming the centre of the Cirque, which was carpeted out as a chess board. The pipers were followed by the living chessmen, who merched to their respective positious on the "board," being dressed to represent the various chess pieces. The game was then opened, Messrs. Hoffer and Herschfeldt being the players. The first game lasted a little more than half an hour, each move being made with deliberation and precision, and upon each "check" being called there was a blast of trumpets. The winner was Mr. Horschfeldt. In another game Mr. Hoffer was victorious.—Brooklyn Chess Chronicle.

PROBLEM No. 437. By F. E. Lamb. BLACK.



WHITE.

White to play and mate in three moves.

SOLUTION OF PROBLEM No. 435. White. 1 K takes P 2 K moves

1 K to K 3 2 K moves 2 Q to Kt 7 3 Q mates 1 K to K 5 or Q 5 2 K moves 2 Q to K 3 ch 3 Q mates

GAME 563RD.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS.

The following game was played in the seventh

(Two Knights Opening.)

WHITE .- (Mr. Blackburne.) BLACK .- (Mr. Steinitz.) 1 P to K 4 1 P to K 4 2 Kt to Q B 3 3 P to K Kt 3 (a) 4 P takes P 5 B to K t 2 6 Kt to B 3 7 Castlss 8 Kt to K 2 (b) 9 P to Q 3 1 P to K 4 2 Kt to K B 3 3 Kt to B 3 4 P to Q 4 5 Kt takes P 5 B to K 3 7 B to K 2 5 Castles 9 B to B 3 (c)
10 Q to Q 2 (d)
11 B to R 6
12 B takes B
13 B to K 2
14 P to B 4
15 Q R to Q sq
16 B to B 4
17 B takes Kt (g)
18 P to B 5
20 Kt to K 6 ch
21 P takes B
22 Q to Kt 5
23 R to Q 3
24 R to Q 3
24 R to R 3 9 P to Q 3 10 Kt to Q 2 11 K to K 4 12 K takes B 13 P to K B 3 14 K to B 2 15 P to B 3 (e) 16 B to Q 2 (f) 17 R takes B 18 Kt to B sq 20 B takes Kt 20 B takes Kt 21 R to K 2(h) 22 Q to K sq 23 R takes P (i) 24 Q to K 2 (j) 23 R to Q 3 24 R to R 3

White mates in three moves.

NOTES.

(a) The kind of defence which Mr. Steinitz would deride were it any one's favorite game but his own. We pronounced against it years ago, and we reiterate our declaration of last week that the game yielded is lost on theory.

(b) No improvement upon R to K sq. as adopted by him against Zukertort.

(c) He rejects, and as we think rightly rejects, the possibility of soon pushing on the K B P.

(d) A avorite line with Mr. Blackburne in games having King's Fianchetto characteristics.

(c) A move indicative of early distress, though containing ameliorative possibilities in default of expeditions skill on the other side. As against vigorous play, P to K B 4 affords the only chance, though certainly a very poor one.

(f) The intended continuation, so no use talking of it being a bad look-out.

(g) Practically a winning move. (h) Our own choice would be R to B 3, which prevents Q to Kt 5, and in other respects allows of something of a struggle.

(i) Equivalent to surrendering. The game is however lost any way, for if 23 P to K R 3, then 24 Q to B 6 ch, K to R 2, 25 Kt to K 4 winning. A better move after 24 Q to B 6 ch, is K to Kt sq. but then 25 Q to R 4, or 25 Q R to B 3, and Black's prospects are hopeless.

(j) There is nothing surprising in such a move. Skill is often wanting where it would avail nothing. If 24 R to K 2, 25 Q to R 6 ch. K to Kt sq. 25 Kt to K 4 winning; while it 24, K to R sq. 25 Q to R 6 winning. Mr. Blackburne's play throughout this game is deserving of much admiration.—Land and Water.

ANSWER THIS

Can you find a case of Bright's Disease of the Knineys, Dobetes, Urinary or Liver Complaints that is curable, that Hop Bitters has not or cannot cure? Ask your neighbors if they can.