

envelope. With a sinking heart she read the lines in which Lady Janet, as "mother and friend," commanded her absolutely to suppress the confession which she had pledged herself to make in the sacred interests of justice and truth. A low cry of despair escaped her, as the cruel complication in her position revealed itself in all its unmerited hardship. "Oh, Lady Janet, Lady Janet!" she thought, "there was but one trial more left in my hard lot—and it comes to me from you!"

She handed the letter to Julian. He took it from her in silence. His pale complexion turned paler still as he read it. His eyes rested on her compassionately as he handed it back.

"To my mind," he said, "Lady Janet herself sets all further doubt at rest. Her letter tells me what she wanted when she sent for Horace, and why my name was mentioned between them."

"Tell me!" cried Mercy, eagerly.

He did not immediately answer her. He sat down again in the chair by her side, and pointed to the letter.

"Has Lady Janet shaken your resolution?" he asked.

"She has strengthened my resolution," Mercy answered. "She added a new bitterness to my remorse."

She did not mean it harshly, but the reply sounded harshly in Julian's ears. It stirred the generous impulses, which were the strongest in his nature. He who had once pleaded with Mercy for compassionate consideration for herself, now pleaded with her for compassionate consideration for Lady Janet. With persuasive gentleness, he drew a little nearer, and laid his hand on her arm.

"Don't judge her harshly," he said. "She is wrong, miserably wrong. She has recklessly degraded herself; she has recklessly tempted you. Still, is it generous—is it even just—to hold her responsible for deliberate sin? She is at the close of her days; she can feel no new affection; she can never replace you. View her position in that light, and you will see (as I see) that it is no base motive which has led her astray. Think of her wounded heart and her wasted life—and say to yourself forgivingly: She loves me!"

Mercy's eyes filled with tears.

"I do say it!" she answered. "Not forgivingly—it is I who have need of forgiveness. I say it gratefully when I think of her—I say it with shame and sorrow when I think of myself."

He took her hand for the first time. He looked, guiltlessly looked, at her downcast face. He spoke as he had spoken at the memorable interview between them, which had made a new woman of her.

"I can imagine no crueller trial," he said, "than the trial that is now before you. The benefactress to whom you owe everything asks nothing from you but your silence. The person whom you have wronged is no longer present to stimulate your resolution to speak. Horace himself (unless I am entirely mistaken) will not hold you to the explanation that you have promised. The temptation to keep your false position in this house is, I do not scruple to say, all but irresistible. Sister and friend! can you still justify my faith in you? Will you still own the truth, without the base fear of discovery to drive you to it?"

She lifted her head, with a steady light of resolution shining again in her grand grey eyes. Her low, sweet voice answered him without a faltering note in it.

"I will!"

"You will do justice to the woman you have wronged—unworthy as she is; powerless as she is to expose you?"

"I will!"

"You will sacrifice everything you have gained by the fraud to the sacred duty of atonement? You will suffer anything—even though you offend the second mother who has loved you and sinned for you—rather than suffer the degradation of yourself?"

Her hand closed firmly on his. Again, and for the last time, she answered,

"I will!"

His voice had not trembled yet. It failed him now. His next words were spoken in faint whispering tones—to himself; not to her.

"Thank God for this day!" he said. "I have been of some service to one of the noblest of God's creatures!"

Some subtle influence, as he spoke, passed from his hand to hers. It trembled through her nerves; it entwined itself mysteriously with the finest sensibilities in her nature; it softly opened her heart to a first vague surmising of the devotion that she had inspired in him. A faint glow of colour, lovely in its faintness, stole over her face and neck. Her breathing quickened tremblingly. She drew her hand away from him, and sighed when she had released it.

He rose suddenly to his feet and left her, without a word or a look, walking slowly down the length of the room. When he turned and came back to her his face was composed, he was master of himself again.

Mercy was the first to speak. She turned the conversation from herself by reverting to the proceedings in Lady Janet's room.

"You spoke of Horace just now," she said, "in terms which surprised me. You

appeared to think that he would not hold me to my explanation. Is that one of the conclusions which you draw from Lady Janet's letter?"

"Most assuredly," Julian answered. "You will see the conclusion as I see it, if we return for a moment to Grace Roseberry's departure from the house."

Mercy interrupted him there. "Can you guess," she asked, "how Lady Janet prevailed upon her to go?"

"I hardly like to own it," said Julian. "There is an expression in the letter which suggests to me that Lady Janet has offered her money, and that she has taken the bribe."

"Oh, I can't think that!"

"Let us return to Horace. Miss Roseberry once out of the house but one serious obstacle is left in Lady Janet's way. That obstacle is Horace Holmcroft."

"How is Horace an obstacle?"

"He is an obstacle in this sense. He is under an engagement to marry you in a week's time, and Lady Janet is determined to keep him (as she is determined to keep every one else) in ignorance of the truth. She will do that without scruple. But the inbred sense of honour in her is not utterly silenced yet. She cannot, she dare not, let Horace make you his wife, under the false impression that you are Colonel Roseberry's daughter. You see the situation? On the other hand, she cannot allow him to marry you blindfold. In this emergency what is she to do? There is but one alternative that I can discover. She must persuade Horace (or she must irritate Horace) into acting for himself, and breaking off the engagement on his own responsibility."

Mercy stopped him. "Impossible!" she cried warmly. "Impossible!"

"Look again at her letter," Julian rejoined. "It tells you plainly that you need fear no embarrassment when you next meet Horace. If words mean anything, those words mean that he will not claim from you the confidence which you have promised to repose in him. On what condition is it possible for him to abstain from doing that? On the one condition that you have ceased to represent the first and foremost interest of his life."

Mercy still held firm. "You are wronging Lady Janet," she said.

Julian smiled sadly.

"Try to look at it," he answered, "from Lady Janet's point of view. Do you suppose she sees anything derogatory to her in attempting to break off the marriage? I will answer for it she believes she is doing you a kindness. In one sense it would be a kindness to spare you the shame of a humiliating confession, and to save you (possibly) from being rejected to your face by the man you love. In my opinion the thing is done already. I have reasons of my own for believing that my aunt will succeed far more easily than she could anticipate. Horace's temper will help her."

Mercy's mind began to yield to him in spite of herself.

"What do you mean by Horace's temper?" she inquired.

"Must you ask me that?" he said, drawing back a little from her.

"I must."

"I mean by Horace's temper, Horace's unworthy distrust of the interest that I feel in you."

She instantly understood him. And more than that, she secretly admired him for the scrupulous delicacy with which he had expressed himself. Another man would not have thought of sparing her in that way. Another man would have said plainly, "Horace is jealous of me."

Julian did not wait for her to answer him. He considerably went on.

"For the reason that I have just mentioned," he said, "Horace will be easily irritated into taking a course which, in his calmer moments, nothing would induce him to adopt. Until I heard what your maid said to you, I had thought (for your sake) of retiring before he joined you here. Now I know that my name has been introduced, and has made mischief upstairs, I feel the necessity (for your sake again) of meeting Horace and his temper face to face before you see him. Let me, if I can, prepare him to hear you, without any angry feeling in his mind towards me. Do you object to retire to the next room for a few minutes, in the event of his coming back to the library?"

Mercy's courage instantly rose with the emergency. She refused to leave the two men together.

"Don't think me insensible to your kindness," she said. "If I leave you with Horace, I may expose you to insult. I refuse to do that. What makes you doubt his coming back?"

"His prolonged absence makes me doubt it," Julian replied. "In my belief, the marriage is broken off. He may go as Grace Roseberry has gone. You may never see him again."

The instant the opinion was uttered, it was practically contradicted by the man himself. Horace opened the library door.

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Chess.

Solutions to problems sent in by Correspondents will be duly acknowledged.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

G. E. C. Montreal.—Thanks for your Problem; it will be duly considered. Your solution of Problem 77 is correct.

The following are two in a series of games played recently by correspondence between Toronto and Hamilton.

Irregular Opening.

White, (Toronto.) Mr. J. A. Russell.

1. P. to Q. B. 4th
2. P. to Q. 4th
3. Q. takes P.
4. Q. to Q. sq.
5. Q. Kt. to B. 3rd
6. Q. B. to K. Kt. 5th
7. P. to K. 3rd
8. P. to K. 2nd
9. P. to K. B. 3rd
10. B. takes Kt.
11. P. to K. 4th
12. Castles (Q. R.)
13. P. to Q. R. 3rd
14. K. to Kt. sq.
15. Q. to Q. B. 2nd
16. Q. takes B.
17. Kt. to K. 2nd
18. R. takes Q. P.
19. R. takes R.
20. Kt. to K. Kt. 3rd
21. B. to K. 2nd
22. R. to Q. B. sq.
23. Kt. to K. B. 5th (c)
24. P. takes B.
25. K. to R. 2nd
26. Q. to K. 3rd
27. Q. takes Q. R. P.
28. K. to R. sq.
29. Q. to R. 5th
30. Q. to Q. Kt. 5th
31. B. to Q. sq.
32. B. to R. 2nd
33. R. to Q. B. 3rd
34. P. to K. B. 4th (e)
35. B. takes P.
36. R. takes Kt.
37. Q. takes R.

Black, (Hamilton.) Dr. I. Ryall.

P. to Q. B. 4th
P. takes P.
Q. Kt. to B. 3rd
P. to K. 4th
K. Kt. to B. 3rd
B. to Q. B. 4th
P. to Q. 3rd
B. to R. B. 4th
P. to K. R. 3rd
Q. takes B.
B. to K. 3rd
B. to Q. Kt. 5th (a)
Kt. to Q. 5th
Kt. to Kt. 6th
B. takes Kt.
Kt. to Q. B. 4th
Castles (K. R.)
K. R. to Q. sq.
R. takes R.
P. to Q. Kt. 4th
R. to Q. B. sq.
Q. to K. B. 5th (b)
B. takes Kt.
Q. takes P. ch.
Kt. to R. 5th
Q. to K. 3rd
Kt. to Kt. 3rd (d)
P. takes P.
R. to R. sq.
R. to R. 5th
R. to R. sq.
R. to Q. B. sq.
P. to K. 5th
Q. to Q. 3rd
Kt. takes B.
R. takes R.
Q. takes K. B. P.

The game was continued for several more moves, Black winning eventually.

(a) Correct; Black has an advantage from this point.
(b) Well played.
(c) Kt. to B. sq., or Q. to B. 2nd, either seems preferable.
(d) Black must now regain his Pawn, still having the better position.
(e) Better, perhaps, to have taken the Pawn, and if Q. takes P., B. to B. 3rd.

Evans' Gambit.

White, (Hamilton.) Dr. I. Ryall.

1. P. to K. 4th
2. K. Kt. to B. 3rd
3. B. to Q. B. 4th
4. P. to Q. Kt. 4th
5. P. to Q. B. 3rd
6. P. to Q. 4th
7. Castles.
8. P. takes P.
9. Q. to Kt. 3rd
10. P. to K. 5th
11. P. takes P.
12. Kt. to Kt. 5th
13. P. to K. 6th
14. Q. Kt. to B. 3rd (a)
15. Kt. to K. 5th
16. B. to K. 3rd
17. R. takes B.
18. Kt. takes K. B. P. (b)
19. B. takes Kt.
20. R. takes B. (c)

Black, (Toronto.) Mr. J. A. Russell.

P. to K. 4th
Q. Kt. to B. 3rd
B. to Q. B. 4th
B. takes Kt. P.
B. to Q. B. 4th
P. takes P.
P. to Q. 3rd
B. to Kt. 3rd
Q. to K. B. 3rd
P. takes P.
Q. to K. Kt. 3rd
Kt. to Q. sq.
Kt. takes P.
Kt. to K. 2nd
Q. to B. 3rd
B. takes B.
Castles (K. R.)
R. takes Kt.
B. takes B.
Mates in three moves.

(a) B. to Q. R. 3rd would also have been a good move here.
(b) Tempting; but the attack had a superior line of play in either Kt. to K. Kt. 4th, Q. R. to Q., or Q. R. to K. sq.
(c) An oversight, evidently; Q. takes B. was the only move left, and even that would have lost the attack completely.

PROBLEM No. 78.

By Mr. Thos. D. S. Moore, London, Ont.

BLACK.

White to play and self-mate in three moves.

SOLUTION OF PROBLEM No. 78.

White, Black.

1. B. to Q. sq. P. to K. Kt. 8th be-
2. B. to K. Kt. 4th coming a Kt. (forced)
3. B. to Q. B. 8th Kt. to K. Kt. 2d (forced)
4. B. mates. Anything.

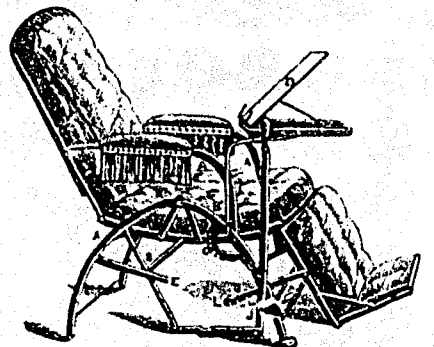
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