

(For the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.)

## RAINY-DAY THOUGHTS.

"Another horrible wet day! As if there hadn't been rain enough all the world over, and now for it to rain, just when we expect bright frosty weather, and perhaps to see the sun for a change," and so on. Every member of the Anglo-Saxon race knows how to grumble. And, truth to say, reader, fair or otherwise, it is not an inviting prospect that we see from our windows. The roads are a quagmire of liquid mud, the trees stand up, gaunt and bare, with no friendly snow to veil their leafless ugliness—the fowls loaf disconsolately about in the sloppy yard, with a total absence of that brisk speculative aspect they generally wear—the busy housewife, her skirt thrown picturesquely but uncomfortably over her head, passes in and out with the half-dried family "wash," with an occasional muttered ejaculation of "drat the rain!"—the family store brought up to meet the exigencies of the late frosts to blood heat, becomes a burden in the present tepid mugginess of the atmosphere, and drives us gasping on to the verandah, in search of fresh oxygen, soon to be driven in again by the pitiless aspect of things without. All nature, in fine, seems to weep, and all mankind to grumble. To grumble, I say. Well, I may be casting a slur on many, the even current of whose habitual good-nature flows on untroubled by atmospheric changes of any kind, and of whom we might say with Horace:

"Si fractus illabatur orbis.  
Impavidum ferient ruinae."

But still, it is an indisputable fact, that a thorough, uncompromising, soaking wet day, coming immediately after a succession of bright frosty weather, will in any Anglo-Saxon community, produce but one effect, that of bitter (though perhaps transitory) discontent. One almost feels inclined to follow, in a modified form, the example of the Scotch laird who "went out into the middle of the road, and swore at lairge." But still, when, as political writers say, we "look the issue fairly and squarely in the face," what real cause have we for grumbling on such a day as I have described? How much better are we situated, meteorologically, than the inhabitants of many other countries, in England, for instance, where it generally rains, (a friend of mine told me that he always knew a newly-arrived old country-man, because he invariably carried an umbrella), in Scotland, where it rains almost incessantly, or in Ireland, where it never does anything else. *A propos* of Scotland, do we not all know the story of the Englishman salmon-fishing in the highlands of Inverness-shire, who, after six weeks of uninterrupted "soft weather," said, somewhat irately to his landlord: "Does it always rain in this confounded country?" and his landlord's answer "Weel a weel, Sir, it whiles snaws." Yes, let us be thankful that, in Canada, whatever her other faults may be, we are blessed (barring the winter in a few extra months) with a good, cheerful, seasonable climate. But again, granting an occasional rainy day, why should it be of necessity a season of dullness and depression of spirit? The "people's poet," Longfellow, sings "The day is wet, and dark, and dreary," and "my soul still clings to the mouldering past," and all the rest of it, but *cui bono*? Suppose, then, that the inevitable wet day has come, steady, inexorable rain, not a ghost of a chance of clearing-up, and let us suppose that you are one of those whose time is in a measure their own, and, moreover, of fairly literary tastes. To begin with, nothing will put you so thoroughly in tune for the day, as a good stretching constitutional, always supposing that you live in one of those "happy valleys" where there are side-walks. Put on your long boots, your mackintosh, and a "seedy" hat, and step out like a man, regardless of the weather. It will do you good, and no man knows the pleasure of dry garments, till he has experienced the discomfort of wet ones. Returned, and having cast your water-proof slough, bethink yourself of what there is to be done. Get into your oldest coat, and your easiest slippers—fill up your choicest and sweetest pipe, put on your considering (or smoking) cap, and think what you can do. And here let me remark, *en parenthèse*, that an occasional wet day is to me (a fairly worked individual) a source of unbounded gratitude, for I then find time to do a thousand and one things I should otherwise perhaps never accomplish. And similar remedies suit similar cases. For instance, there is that old school or college friend, who was your fidus Achates in the old country, and your heart smites you, when you think that by never a line has he learned of your weal or woe since the good ship "Flying Dutchman" wafted you out from Liverpool. What a flood of old memories the very thought of his name calls up! How it brings to mind those boyish exploits of long-ago—the delicious swims on hot July afternoons, the hard fought cricket-match between the rival houses of Busby and Wishtail, the youthful friendships, hot and short-lived—and then the recollections of old college-days—how one sees again the grey old ivy-crowned pile by the banks of Granta or Isis, the venerable chapel, with the sweet voices of the choristers going up like "winged raptures" to heaven, the merry flashes of talk (chaff largely predominating) in the vaulted dining-hall, the packed benches of the debating society, where every speaker was a future Disraeli, and conservative measures were always sweepingly carried. But there, sit down and spin your old chum a long yarn—tell him that Canada is the finest country in the world, which it

is—tell him that bears as a rule do not walk the streets of Montreal, and that the playful Iroquois has buried the war-hatchet for ever and a day, except for domestic purposes. I know several men who never write even to their nearest relatives in the old country, except on wet days. A lady whom I met lately in England, and to whom I was remarking on the brilliancy of the weather, said, with a half-sigh—"Yes, it's a lovely day, but I hope it's raining in Canada; for Charlie (her son) never writes home unless it rains so hard, that he cannot possibly get out to attend to his farm." Again, supposing you have some hard reading-matter you want to dispose of. Now is the time to do it. Take down your metaphysics or your history, your Spencer or your Macaulay, and go at them with a will. Or, suppose you are of a scribbling turn of mind, and have, we will say an article on "the Beautiful and the Sublime, as exemplified by Canadian politics" on the stocks. Then out with your smoothest foolscap, and your best "Mitchell's J." (the manufacture of quills that will write being unfortunately one of the lost arts) and tackle it. Or, you are of mechanical tastes, and have a Henri Quatre book-shelf, or Gothic dog-kennel, or Renaissance pig-stye in your mind's eye—off with your coat, then, and do not rest until you have fashioned for the guardian of your slumbers a habitation unique in ugliness and sharp corners. Or, you are not by nature one of the tidiest of mortals, then set to work on the family lumber-room, and reduce chaos to order in some measure—or certain drawers in your escritoire are an eyesore and a burden to you—then draw and have at them (forgive the unwitting pun) and, if you are, or ever have been, of a sentimental disposition, what a flood of recollections come upon you here. Ah me! what a history would the interior of some men's desks and writing-tables tell us, if their "poor, poor dumb mouths" could speak. You turn over the heterogeneous mass of seemingly purposeless rubbish, and what a story each one tells. A tiny white glove—have you forgotten the field of which that was the trophy? That ball given by the Slopsire Yeomanry years ago in the dear quaint old Town-Hall of Slopington, and that last waltz with bewitching little Minnie Trippington? It is years since, but you have not yet forgotten those treacherous brown eyes that shot "soft lightnings" through you from her brougham window. And what came of it? Minnie married the rich incumbent of Slocum Podger, and you? Well, you are the largest farmer in the township of Turtleopolis,

"A Lord of fat prize-oxen, and of sheep,"

like Tennyson's baronet, and you will "run" for Parliament at the next election on "protective" principles, if you can only tear yourself away from your beloved short-horns. What have we next? What was once a dainty knot of blue ribbon, now sadly faded and tarnished. Don't you remember that steeple-chase (over four miles of a fair hunting-country) when you entered on your celebrated bay hunter Rat-catcher, and were to have won, but didn't? Do you recall the thrill that shot through you, as you stopped in front of the Grand Stand, and some one pinned that dainty knot on the breast of your racing-shirt! And now, some one is Mrs. General McFusty, and reigns with undisputed sway over the society civil and military of Cherootabad, Bombay Presidency, and you are a non-commissioned officer in the Turtleopolis Rangers; and if ever you do ride about your farm, it is on a steady beast, well up to your noble weight of 18 odd stone. And what have we here? A bundle of letters, the ink yellow with age, the fair hand who wrote them is as Mr. Toots would say, Another's, with a capital A, and here is the photograph of your fairest cousin, whom once you thought you loved dearer than life. You went home two years ago, and attended the funeral of your maternal great aunt, from whom you had expectations, (which were not realised) and you saw that fairest cousin, and what a change had come o'er the spirit of your dream! That exquisite peach complexion had mellowed to the ripe hue of some forty odd summers, that silvery voice was loud and strident, that willowy form robust and matronly, and you felt that the fair illusion was dispelled, and you went back again to your back-woods and your short-horns. Well-a-day, collect the precious relics, and, if you are wise, burn them reverently on a sacred pyre. But how our theme has led us gossiping on! However, if these few poor thoughts have given any one the idea that rainy days may be utilized, aye, that things may be done at such times which a whole "month of sundays" of fine weather would never see accomplished, the writer is happy.

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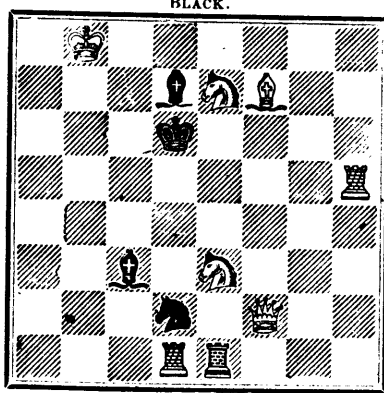
Solutions to Problems sent in by Correspondents will be duly acknowledged

## TO CORRESPONDENTS

G. J. Seaforth. Letter and game received. Many thanks.  
H. A. C. F., Montreal. Solution of Problem No. 47 received. Correct. Your solution of Problem No. 45 shall be looked over again.

We see it stated that a gentleman of England offers prizes to the value of £100 sterling for competition amongst working class Chess Players, men and women. This is justly considered as a movement of great liberality, and it is employed in the right direction. The working man after the labours of the day requires some relaxation, and we do not see why he should not obtain it from Chess. There can be no reason for restricting this intellectual pastime to any one class of society.

PROBLEM No. 49.  
By J. H. Blackburne, the winner of the Second Prize in the Vienna Congress.



White to play and mate in four moves.

GAME 57TH.  
(From Land and Water.)

Played a few days ago at the Café de la Régence between M. Rosenthal, now the best player in France, and M. le Comte de l'Eglise. The moves are from *La Stratégie*.

- Muzio Gambit.
- WHITE.—(Mr. Rosenthal.) BLACK.—(M. le Comte.)
1. P to K 4th
  2. P to K B 4th
  3. Kt to K B 3rd
  4. B to B 4th
  5. Castles
  6. Q takes P
  7. P to K 5th
  8. B to Q 3rd
  9. B to Q 2nd
  10. Kt to Q B 3rd
  11. Q R to K sq (a)
  12. Kt to Q 5th
  13. B to B 3rd
  14. R takes Kt (d)
  15. B to B 6th
  16. R to K sq
  17. R to K 5th
  18. R takes Kt
  19. R takes B P (dis ch)
  20. B to K 5th (ch)
  21. R takes B (ch)
  22. B to Q 6th (ch)
  23. Q takes Q P (ch)
  24. Q to K 5th (ch)
  25. Q to B 6th (ch)
  26. B to B 7th (ch)
- And mates next move.

## NOTES.

- (a) All the moves are strictly orthodox on both sides up to this point.  
(b) This move, the invention of Herr Paulsen, is considered better than the old play of Q to B 4th (ch).  
(c) R to K sq is better. The defence then gets the best of it.  
(d) The right style. In the Muzio it is fatal to play a slow game.  
(e) If 15 B to K Kt 4th, White takes the Knight, and then the Rook, and remains with a slight advantage. In answer to R to K sq, White also plays R to K sq, and afterwards R to K 5th.  
(f) Any other move loses the Queen.  
(g) Better to have played to K sq.  
(h) K to Kt 3rd would have secured a draw.  
(i) If B to B 2nd, the mate is in two moves. The ending is very smart.

## GAME 58TH.

Played in the late Tournament at Ottawa, between Mr. Jackson, who won the First Prize, and another competitor.

- WHITE.—(Mr. —) BLACK.—(Mr. Jackson.)
1. P to K 4th
  2. Kt to K B 3rd
  3. Kt takes P
  4. Kt to K B 3rd
  5. P to Q 4th
  6. B to Q 3rd
  7. Castles
  8. P to Q B 4th
  9. P takes P
  10. Kt to Q B 3rd
  11. P takes Kt
  12. Kt to K 5th
  13. P takes Kt
  14. K to R sq
  15. P to K B 4th
  16. Q to Q B 2nd
  17. B to Q Kt 2nd
  18. B to Q B sq
  19. P to Q B 4th
  20. P to Q B 5th (a)
  21. B to K R 7th (ch)
  22. Q takes B
  23. Q to Q B 2nd (ch)
  24. Q to Q B 3rd
  25. B to Q Kt 2nd
  26. R to K Kt sq (c)
  27. P to K 6th (d)
- And White resigns.

## NOTES.

- (a) Throwing away a Pawn.  
(b) If K R to Q sq. Black would lose the exchange.  
(c) A bad move.  
(d) Losing the game at once.

## SOLUTIONS.

Solution of Problem No. 47.

- By Mr. Murphy. (The Composer.)
- WHITE. BLACK.
1. R to Q 7th
  2. Kt to K 6th
  3. B, mates.
- if
1. B to Q 4th
  2. B takes Kt or K moves.
- if
1. R to K sq
  2. K moves.
- if
1. K moves
  2. K moves.
- if
1. Any other move.
  2. B takes Kt or K moves

## Solution of Problem for Young Players, No. 46.

- WHITE. BLACK.
1. Q to K B 4th (ch)
  2. Q takes B P (ch)
  3. Kt to K B 4th (ch)
  4. R mates.
1. K moves
2. P takes Q
3. K moves.
- PROBLEMS FOR YOUNG PLAYERS.
- No. 47.
- WHITE. BLACK.
1. K at K 2nd
  2. R at K R 4th
  3. B at Q 6th
  4. B at K 8th
  5. Kt at K B 4th
  6. Pawns at Q 3rd, Q Kt 4th and 6th
1. K at Q 5th
2. B at K 4th
3. Kt at Q R 5th
4. Pawns at K Kt 3rd
5. Q 6th and Q Kt 2nd
- White to play and mate in three moves.

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Montreal, 27th Nov., 1875.

1876.

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