

seize and devour with avidity the red berries of the holly.

Looking back on my long life, of course I remember many Christmases. There have been different kinds of Christmases. It seems to me that the old Christmas-days were colder and more snowy than our late Christmases, except, perhaps, on the east coast. Once, and only once, do I remember being really snowed up. We were living then on the skirts of a vast moorland region; we told ourselves, with bated breath, that the snow lay so many feet deep in the courses and gullies. The butcher's and the grocer's carts missed us on one occasion, but it was not really important; our very liberal orders of the week before, given in good time, had been duly delivered. Add to this, my brother-in-law, a very good shot, had managed to knock off an extraordinary number of woodcocks who were haunting the marshy ground about our place; so that, with old ale and wine, we were able, despite all things, to spend our Christmas cheerfully and royally. I had been a salesman, and was now a traveller in an old-established firm where I am now a senior partner, and where my son John is a junior partner. That old Rev. Olintus Grindler had not been so far wrong when he declared that it was quite impossible that I should ever do much good with Greek and Latin. I thought that the streets of London would be paved with gold, which is so far true that gold laid on many a London site would not suffice to buy it; and also that I should soon make my fortune, in which idea I was egregiously mistaken, as have been many other good fellows. I found a small business connection with my firm already existing, and I worked it into something much larger. I had taken a house tolerably central for this district, but at other times I had to make long journeys—journeys to Wales, to Scotland, and to Ireland, and on one occasion to one of the colonies. I always attempted to get back to home and to Aglaia, but on several occasions, both before and after my marriage, I had to spend Christmas away from home. I am thankful to say that those Christmases have left a very cheerful impress on my memory. I was only one degree less happy than if I had been at home. The first time I was away from home was during the single year which I spent at Cambridge. I had during the last term of that year been working very hard. O, how I wish that in the days of my boyhood the Reverend Olintus had tied me up now and then, and had given me a few dozen, in order that I might learn things which I ought to have known before I went up to the University! My father had told me, and he was a man who always put the truth fairly before me, that unless I obtained this scholarship he would be unable to keep me at college. I did not obtain this scholarship, and I did not continue at Cambridge; but at the same time I have found that it has always been of use to me in business that I passed a year in an English university. I and some other fellows had been "swotting," as the term used to go, during the Christmas vacation—a sort of thing which is encouraged at Cambridge, though I believe not at Oxford—and we dined in hall that day—an extremely good dinner; and the dean of our college, now a right reverend prelate, sent us down with his compliments a couple of peculiarly tawny bottles of port, in which we drank his very good health and all prosperity to him, an inspiration which has been fully gratified.

Again, I remember passing a Christmas, in pursuance of a kind invitation, in one of the pretty islands immediately off the west coast of Scotland. Two things greatly astonished me. The first was, that this island, which I thought would be very cold, was extremely mild, with pure western breezes and out-door plants, and that even consumptive patients had been sent there for their health. The next thing that astonished me was the exceedingly rudimentary and imperfect idea which the natives entertained respecting the observance of Christmas. It seems that they postponed their festivities till New-Year's-day. It struck me as something simply barbarous. Nevertheless, as at that other island of Melita, the "barbarous people" showed us no little kindness, and we did our best in return to eat and drink for them as well as for ourselves. On another occasion, being obliged to spend Christmas at an hotel in the north of England, the landlord very kindly invited me to his own family Christmas dinner, and refused to score anything against me on Christmas-day in the way of eating and drinking. I have had the pleasure of entertaining that man's son in my house for several weeks at a time since. At another time I was stranded in a country village. As I lingered in the churchyard after the service, the rector approached me, saying that he knew all his little congregation, and perceiving that I was a stranger, and in the kindest way took me back to dinner with him. I have rarely seen such an assembly of beautiful happy faces in my life as were crowded together in his drawing room. It was a perfect blaze of loveliness—daughters, nieces, friends. It seems that a wedding was to come off in a day or two, and this was the reason, he said, their house being crowded, that he could not offer me a bed. I am one of those who "love that beauty should go beautifully." I have rarely seen such a galaxy of fair creatures, with so much courtesy and graciousness among them. "Manners maketh man?" Manners are the fruit of noble mind,—true sayings both. I have never had the opportunity of returning precisely the same kind of Christmas courtesy. But it so happened that one Christmas morning, taking a stroll as far as the London road, a few fields from my house, I

saw a young man leaning over a stile in a dejected sort of way. He told me that he was the mate of a ship, and was coming up from Portsmouth, having lost all his money there, and that he thought he could walk so as to arrive home late on Christmas night; but that, as a matter of fact, he had not had any breakfast, and did not see his way to any breakfast. The little difficulty was soon got over, and he reached home long before nightfall, to cheer the hearts of an old father and mother. And in that old *escrioire*, stowed away in one of the drawers where I kept my precious treasures, is a tear-blotted letter of thanks from that man, saying that he was trying to start again on a better course, and be no longer wild and foolish.

But the most extraordinary incident which ever befell me on a Christmas was in this wise: I had been down in the middle of Wales to examine into some speculations which our firm had taken up. Now in Wales there were and are a whole lot of little railways belonging to little companies. These little railways are vanity and vexation of spirit; at least they are fertile enough in producing the latter result. When you travel on the great arterial lines you can do so with rapidity and comfort. But it is dreadful work getting along those little lines in order to join the great lines. And these little lines, instead of being glad and proud to join the great lines, give themselves all sorts of airs, and seem to take a pride and pleasure in not keeping their time. I had made every arrangement for getting back in good time for Christmas day. Aglaia would be waiting for me, and my son Johnny and two or three little Aglaias. And I was conceited enough to think that my being absent would go some way towards spoiling the Christmas of those who were at home. But I lost the train. The local train did not arrive at the junction till twenty minutes after the London train had departed; which was simply excusable on the part of the local train. I was almost mad with the annoyance at the moment. But it was a crisp, frosty, cheerful morning, and I resolved to walk and walk till I had walked off most of my chagrin. And a lovely walk I had through some of the most romantic and best-known scenery of the Principality. The evening was gathering in as I entered a neat little country town, and made my way to what I took to be the principal hotel. I entered the coffee-room, where a cheerful fire was in a fireplace at each end of the room (the system of double fireplaces flanking each other is a good one), and there, idly lounging on an easy chair, supported by one or two other chairs to assist the recumbent position, was my own brother Horace, whom I supposed away in foreign parts, and had not seen for a dozen years. It was one of the most extraordinary things that ever happened to me. He too had been stranded high and dry by one of these little railway lines. Having landed at Liverpool, he thought he would spend a few days in Wales before going on to our sister's in the Midlands. A train had broken down altogether a few miles off and he had walked along the embankment into the town. It was a comfort to me that, as he could not spend his Christmas with me, I should be spending mine with him. We contrived to have two clear days together, although there was as much talk to be talked as might occupy us for a fortnight. And we had a glorious find that Christmas. The Landlord of this inn had a quantity of wonderful old Madeira, stowed in his cellar long before the vines were first spoiled, which, as the natives refused to drink at the extremely moderate price which he asked for it, he put aside and had well-nigh forgotten. I told him to his great astonishment, that he would probably get five times the price in London. He told us he would perhaps send it, but that in the mean time he would be glad if we drank as much of it as we could at six shillings a bottle. That unbelieving landlord has never sent that scarce and almost priceless wine into the London market. With that wonderful old Sabine did we two welcome one another. And when one considers that in the case of large families scattered brethren do not spend many days of their lives together, I was not sorry to have missed this Christmas from home to spend it with a long-absent brother.

The most prosperous circumstance of my life also happened to me on a Christmas. I have no doubt it was so designed by the kindly persons—now gone over to the majority—who sent me a certain most pleasing letter, which came to hand on the morning of Christmas-day, and which proved to be the most welcome Christmas present I had ever received. For many years it had been a hard struggle with me. I could not take the fortresses of trade by storm. My position was a precarious and anxious one. Still I had great helps and alleviations. My gentle training at home, school, and college had given me literary and artistic tastes which proved a relief and adornment to a business life. I think they really helped me in my business, and conciliated the good graces of the members of the firm. But every night I was able to lay aside my burden of care and business, and once in a year, for the Christmas season—from the blessed eve to the New Year's-night—there was a quiet harbour of rest, beyond which the waves of trouble might roll, but where they could not enter. But while my expenses were increasing my income did not increase, and I only held my position as hireling from year to year. I was wondering whether I could not obtain a partnership, or even set up in a business on my own account with all its risks and liabilities. I had, however, succeeded in putting aside all cares for a time, although I knew that they would come

upon me in battalions presently. But on that Christmas morning I received a most kind letter from "my people," offering me junior partnership in the firm. It was an improvement in income and position, with a moral certitude of permanence and of independence. The elder partner was retiring from an active share in the house, and as neither he nor the other partner had any near relation to advance, there was an opening for one whom they were pleased to think "an old, able, and faithful servant." If I was their true good servant near to heaven, it was Aglaia's serene heavenly influence that had made and kept me such. From that time my path in life has been very easy. Other troubles I have had—and let no man born of woman ever think that he will be without his troubles—but they have never been of a heavy kind. I am now the senior partner—a sleeping, a very sleeping partner, indeed—and my son John is the junior partner. And as for Christmas, I gather my children and my children's children around me; my Christmas table is expanded, and yearly groans more heavily beneath the greater preparations for the greater number of guests.

And so I think of the old Christmas-days with a soft regret, and also with an awful joy. In all, I think of her, "now the most blessed memory of my age, that dear Aglaia—think of her, not as I have often seen her, with traces of care, sorrow, and anxiety eye, lip, and brow, but with a saint like aureole about her soft golden hair, a very light of immortality in her dark loving eyes. I think of that oldest and best Christmas-day of all, when shepherds were keeping watch over their flocks by night, and the vision of the angels appeared to them, and the music of the angels floating over them; and I cling to the thought that my darkening eyes will yet see something of that glory, my dull ears catch something of that melody, and that Aglaia will be with me there.

HUMOROUS.

THEY have dime savings banks in Chicago—banks that save for depositors a dime out of every dollar. "At once, will clean silver." Yes, alcohol well-stuck to will clean out all the silver you have got.

IN the dreary days of autumn, when all are in the mopes, we are cheered by the festive abnances with their potent medicine jokes.

IT makes a paragrapher feel depressed to be called from the penning of an article descriptive of the golden beauties of autumn to write a dolger for a negro minstrel troupe.

IT is lying awake nights trying to determine whether to leave your fortune to an orphan asylum or home for old men that makes the newspaper business so wearing.

"A LOVER" writes us: "Suppose I see a young lady home from church, and the night is dark and rainy, and upon arriving at her house she darts through the door without saying as much as 'good night,' leaving me standing outside, what would you advise me to do in such a case?" You had better start for home immediately, if you have an umbrella. Under no circumstances should you stand on the steps of the lady's house all night. It would be preferable to crawl into the nearest friendly store box, and wait for daylight to appear or the rain to disappear.

LITERARY.

VICTOR HUGO has still in his possession the manuscripts of two unpublished tragedies in verse. One entitled "Les Jumeaux," is founded on the story of the Iron Mask, and the other has for its subject Torquemada. The poet intends these plays to remain unseen till after his death, but his friends are endeavouring to induce him to change his determination.

A STORY, entitled "The Return of the Native," by Mr. Thomas Hardy, author of "Far from the Madding Crowd," will be begun in the January number of *Balgarny*. The scenes will chiefly be laid in the open air, on the hills of a large heath to the west of the New Forest; and the leading characters will be sounded by a chorus of rustics, as in some of the writer's previous novels.

OUR CHESS COLUMN.

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

All communications intended for this department to be addressed Chess Editor, Office of CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS, MONTREAL.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. W. S., Montreal.—Letter received. Much obliged. Also, solution of Problem No. 132. Correct. Student, Montreal.—Solution of Problem No. 151 received. Correct. Sigma, Montreal.—Solution of Problem No. 149. Correct. E. H.—Solution of Problem for Young Players No. 149 received. Correct. W. W.—The King cannot be played to the adjacent square to that on which the rival King is stationed.

In the Westminster Papers for November we find the usual amount of Chess news from all parts of the world, besides problems and games enough to satisfy the most ardent lover of the gentle game.

This periodical ought to be in the hands of every Chess-player in Canada, for independent of the Chess news, which has a freshness about it that all must like, the matter in each number, when gathered into a volume, will afford means not only for study, but for reference, which few players would be inclined to treat with indifference.

From information which we have received, we are glad to find that Mr. Bird's new work on Chess will be issued to subscribers in a few days.

(From the Detroit Free Press, Dec. 1st, 1877.)

AN EXPLANATION.

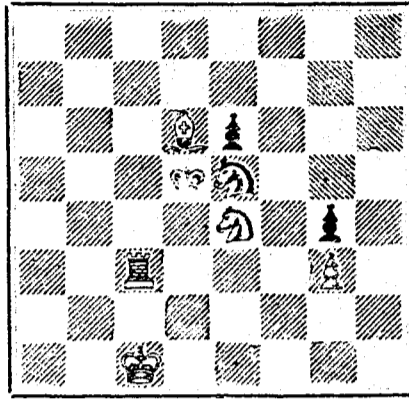
Several months ago the Chess Editor was requested by a correspondent to test a set of Problems which were intended for competition in a Tourney. The Problems were examined, found correct, and so reported to the author, whose name, for obvious reasons, cannot at present be given.

Mr. Carpenter, of Tarrytown, N.Y. sent to this column an excellent two-move problem (see *Free Press* Problem No. 381). The Editor recognized the similarity of Mr. Carpenter's Problem to a position that he had previously met with, but as the place or date could not be located, the problem received publication, and this brings us to the question at issue.

The *Huddersfield College Magazine*, in its September issue, gives the above-mentioned set of problems, the two-move of which is identically the same as Mr. Carpenter's with the exception of the intruding Pawn at K 2. Mr. Carpenter has proved to the satisfaction of the Editor that his problem is original with him, having been composed over a year ago; the author of the Tourney problem in question just as conclusively demonstrates that the problem is his own original conception, thereby establishing beyond question the fact that precisely the same idea has been carried out by parties widely separated, and in this case the very process of thinking alike is evident, even to the occupation of certain squares, the forces used, and the conditions of both problems.

PROBLEM No. 153.

By P. J. DUFFY. (From English Chess Problems.) BLACK.



White to play and mate in three moves.

The following hard-fought consultation game was played in London, Eng., some time ago, between Messrs. Steinitz and Zukertort on one side, and Messrs. Blackburne and Potter on the other.

GAME 229TH.

(Evans' Gambit declined.)

WHITE.	BLACK.
Messrs. Blackburne and Potter.	(Messrs. Steinitz and Zukertort.)
1. P to K 4	P to K 4
2. K Kt to B 3	Q Kt to B 3
3. B to B 4	B to B 4
4. P to Q Kt 4	B to K 3
5. P to Q R 4	P to Q R 3
6. P to B 3	Kt to K B 3
7. Q to K 2	P to Q 3
8. P to Q 3	B to K 3
9. Kt to R 3	Kt to K 2
10. Castles	P to B 3
11. K to R sq	P to R 3
12. Kt to K Kt sq	P to K Kt 4
13. B to K 3	B to B 2
14. P to B 3	Kt to K 3
15. P to Kt 3	P to Q 4
16. B to R 2	Castles
17. K R to Q sq	P to Q R 4
18. P to Kt 5	Q to K 2
19. Kt to B 2	P to Q B 4
20. B to B sq	P to Q 5
21. B takes B	Q takes B
22. P to Q B 4	P to Kt 3
23. R to K B sq	K to Kt 2
24. Q to Kt 2	Kt to R 2
25. B to Q 2	P to B 4
26. Q R to K sq	Q R to K sq
27. Kt to K R 3	P to B 5
28. Kt to Kt sq	Kt to K B 3
29. R to K 2	R to K R sq
30. Kt to K R 3	K to B 2
31. R to K Kt sq	Q R to K Kt sq
32. Q to B sq	K to K sq
33. P to Kt 4	Kt to B sq
34. K R to Kt 2	P to R 4
35. Kt to B 2	Kt to Kt 3
36. P takes P	Kt to R 5
37. Kt to K Kt 4	Kt takes R
38. Q takes Kt	Kt tak's P
39. K to Kt sq	B to Q sq
40. B to K sq	Kt to R 3
41. P to R 3 (e)	K to B 2
42. Q to B 4	R to R 4
43. R to R 2	R from Kt sq to R sq
44. Q to Kt 2	R from R sq to R 2
45. Kt to R sq (d)	B to B 2
46. Kt to Kt 3	Q to B sq
47. Kt to B sq	Q to K R sq
48. Kt to B 2	R to R 5
49. Kt to K 2	K to K 2
50. K to R sq	R to Kt 2
51. Kt to Kt sq	Abandoned as drawn.

NOTES.

(a) This move is considered to have saved the game for White.  
(b) In order to get the Kt to K Kt sq., which White accomplishes at the right moment.

SOLUTIONS.

Solution of Problem No. 151.

WHITE.	BLACK.
1. P to B 3 becoming a Bishop	1. Kt to Q R 3
2. K takes Kt	2. B moves
3. B mates.	

Solution of Problem for Young Players, No. 149.

WHITE.	BLACK.
1. Q to Q Kt 6	1. Any move
2. Q mates.	

PROBLEMS FOR YOUNG PLAYERS NO. 150.

WHITE.	BLACK.
K at Q 3	K at Q 4
Q at Q R sq	R at K R 4
B at K Kt 2	B at Q B 4
Kt at K 4	Pawn at Q B 3
Kt at K Kt 7	

White to play and mate in two moves.

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