

OFFICIAL SIGNAL-BUOYS FOR
SEA-GOING SHIPS.

A.—It has long been customary, in cases of disaster to ships at sea, either by fire or by collision with icebergs, &c., to throw overboard a bottle, containing a record of such disaster, both in the hope of succor following those who may have taken to the boats, and from the natural desire felt by persons in danger of perishing that their fate might become known to their friends.

2. Owing to their fragility of structure, numbers of these bottles must necessarily be lost, through being dashed against hard substances.

3. Doubtless, also, many such a bottle is passed by ships without ever being noticed or picked up, there being nothing in its appearance to attract attention, or to indicate the nature of its contents.

4. It is notorious that cruel hoaxes are sometimes perpetrated, by the scattering of bottles containing false news of missing vessels. An instance of this occurred after the disappearance of the steamer "City of Boston," from Halifax for Liverpool, in 1870, a bottle having been subsequently picked up on the British coast, containing particulars as to her fate, which were proved by circumstantial evidence to be necessarily false.

5. The point of one of Victor Hugo's works ("L'Homme qui Rit") turns upon an incident of this nature; but the story is unnatural, simply because, practically, no body of men, about to perish, would have sufficient calmness of mind to carry out all the details therein described, for establishing the authenticity of their record.

6. Many a ship's company, forced to take to their boats, leave no record upon the scene of the disaster, either from a consideration of the difficulties above mentioned, or from the want of consideration at all, that any practical good might result therefrom.

SUGGESTED, THEREFORE:—

I. That every sea-going ship, Naval and mercantile, be required to carry, as part of her equipment, two OFFICIAL SIGNAL-BUOYS, supplied by Government, stamped with an official seal, and of such a nature as both to attract attention and to establish their nature and their authenticity at a glance.

II. That these buoys be of two shapes, one of which should be such as to be held comparatively in position by the water, while the other would be carried by the wind along the surface like a bubble.

The above shapes are suggested, *a* being the buoy (say of tin or sheet-iron), *b* a water-tight screw joint, like that of a pocket-flask, and *c* a wire ring, fixed upright, so that the buoy might be picked up with a boat-hook, or fished up with a hook and line, without the necessity of lowering a boat. The buoys to be painted bright red, so as to be easily discernible in the water and attract the attention of the look-out.

III. That the signal buoys of each nation have their national colours painted thereon, so that when a ship picks one up, the papers of which prove undecipherable, the captain will be able, without a moment's delay, on reaching his port, to hand them to the Consul of the nation to which they appertain.

a. When time permits, the message to be placed in the buoy should be picked out in the letters of the Commercial Code of Signals, which being international, the message would be intelligible, even to the captain of a foreign vessel.

The chances of succor to crews and passengers that are compelled to take to their boats, or to drift in mid-ocean upon rafts, would thus be greatly increased. How often do ships pass through the debris from burnt and foundered vessels, or meet abandoned craft, where no indication exists as to whether the survivors have left hours or weeks before, or whether they have tried to shape a course, while, perhaps, huddled upon the horizon, there may be struggling boats or drifting rafts, freighted to the water's edge with human beings, who are watching the mast-heads of the passing ship with mingled hope and despair; whereas, one of these signal buoys, flashed in the rigging of an abandoned vessel, floating among wreckage, or wafted to land by the wind, might lead to the speedy rescue of many of those whose fate would otherwise be found in the brief but dreadful record "Never heard from." The general knowledge moreover, among crews and passengers, that these signal-buoys formed part of the equipment of every sea-going ship, would naturally suggest their use to the mind, upon a ship sinking or being abandoned, where now, in the confusion,

no one may think of adopting any means of communication with the shore or with passing ships.

Even in the case of a craft stranded upon a desert island or rocky ledge, these two messengers, sent off, one drifting one way with the current, the other wafted on another course by the wind, might prove the means of rescue from a weary imprisonment, or from the horrors of starvation.

B.—It is not unusual for Ships of War and surveying ships, upon a current being entered which is not marked upon the charts, or when a current is met the course of which has been altered by terrestrial changes, to throw overboard bottles with records therein, in the hope that the drift of the new current may be obtained, by the bottles being picked up at another point, which would determine the "set" of the current. The bottle system is, however, as objectionable and as futile in this view as the one just alluded to.

SUGGESTED, THEREFORE:—

That Ships of War and surveying ships only (to preclude causeless and unwise action) be provided with signal-buoys for scientific purposes, striped black and white, so that the masters of passing merchant ships, with whom time is money, would know which buoys they might pass by without notice, should it be inconvenient to heave-to, and which ones the common cause of humanity commanded them, if possible, to overhaul.

Perhaps the latter suggestion is scarcely less important than the former. A knowledge of the ocean current system, and a due allowance for current-set where known, are important factors in the science of navigation. It was neglect of allowance for the current off the coast of Nova Scotia that caused the steamer "Atlantic" to be steamed at full speed upon the Sambro rocks, and dashed to pieces, with her great freight of human life, in the year 1873. The ocean current-system is, even yet, not correctly and thoroughly known; and, moreover, variations in the known currents are constantly being caused by terrestrial changes—gradually, from the accumulation of sand-banks, or suddenly, from volcanic upheavals. Thus, when the flagship of Admiral Sir Alexander Milne went to England from Bermuda, in 1864, she struck shallow soundings where a considerable ocean-depth should have been found, and was in discoloured water for two days. For some years after, the place was noted upon the Admiralty charts as "Nile" bank, and all H. M. Ships proceeding from Bermuda to England were ordered to report soundings thereon. Several ships reported deep water where the "Nile" had obtained shoal, until finally H. M. Surveying Ship "Gannet," by regularly quartering across the locality, found definitely that this sub-aqueous mountain (probably volcanic) had again receded into the ocean depths. Terrestrial changes of this nature must cause deviations of the ocean currents at the time of their occurrence, a better knowledge of which deviations would be facilitated by the judicious use of official signal-buoys, in the hands of properly qualified officers; and the information thus acquired would eventually prove very valuable to general navigation. At the same time, these scientific buoys being plainly discernible apart from buoys of emergency, no confusion would exist as to the necessity or otherwise of their being picked up, except when convenient.

COLIN CAMPBELL,

ASSISTANT PAYMASTER, ROYAL NAVY,
(Retired).

DEPARTMENT OF MILITIA AND DEFENCE
OF CANADA,
Ottawa, 26th March, 1879.

Copies of this Memorandum (the original of which is submitted to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty) have been simultaneously forwarded to the Secretary of the Board of Trade, London; the Minister of Marine of the Dominion of Canada; the Colonial Secretaries of Newfoundland, New South Wales, New Zealand, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia; the Secretaries of the Navy and of the Treasury, Washington; and (in English and French) to the Governments of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Norway, Turkey, Brazil and Japan.

HEARTH AND HOME.

BENEVOLENCE.—There are many persons who carry the activities of benevolence in such a way that every one is pained, displeased, or disgusted with them. Their manner of going about and doing good is such that people wish they would stay at home. It is the occasion of misapprehension in the mind of men as to the work of benevolence. It is a hindrance to the very cause which they profess to serve. Beautiful is that benevolence which consists of love perpetually moving among our fellow-creatures as a sister of mercy, throwing its shadow over torrid spots and cooling them, or shedding its warmth on frigid places and thawing them.

TRUE WORTH.—Commonplace qualities, such as simple kindness and truth, are better and more important than any of those exceptional powers which we generally call "gifts." The things which "distinguish" us are trifles: those which we have in common make our true worth. The most remarkable men may have their hearts as much in the right place and be as kind and as gentle in reality as their least-gifted fellow-creatures. But the fellow-creatures take notice of the singularity, and forget the right hand of fellowship. And so the mere superficial grace or talent meant to be a gain to all too often becomes, in some shape or other, a barrier separating those who might be "chief friends" or intimate acquaintances.

TACT.—There is nothing more useful in a family, as a cushion to every fall, a buffer to every blow, than tact. It always knows the right thing to say, the exact thing to do; it knows how to lift the pleasant hand at the very moment for soothing ruffled plumage; it knows on debatable questions how to put others in such good humour that it can carry its point; it never alludes to a forbidden subject; it turns conversations from dangerous approaches; it never sees what is best unseen; it does not answer to that which requires a scathing reply if heard at all; it remembers names and faces; it has the *à propos* anecdote; if it does not go out of the way to flatter, neither does it go out of the way to blame; where it cannot praise it is silent, and it never consents to mortify. Thus tact, it would appear, is a species of kindness, a dislike to wound as well as a desire to give pleasure—perhaps also a species of selfishness in its automatic shrinking from crying, quarrelling, and discomfort of any kind.

STRENGTH OF WOMEN.—Why women should be commiserated on account of their supposed lack of vigour is a mystery to us. It is a well authenticated fact that women who have not exceptional frames can, by training, equal and surpass men in the exploits of the gymnast; and if in this most strength-taxing profession they can put themselves on an equality with man, what is to prevent women lifting themselves out of their present feebleness by some system of judicious education, combining exercise and hygiene? No one has sufficiently computed, it seems to us, the grand elasticity of womanhood. Heaven has given her a brain as well as the sacred office of maternity. Not by spasmodic intellectual effort, with intervals of indolence and vague imaginings, are the great mothers of the race to be reared and formed. The perfectly healthy woman whom the doctors never see will laugh if you tell her she was created an intermittent invalid. She knows the sustaining force, the healthful reserve of power, which keeps the balance of her pulses under all the complex conditions of her life. Nature has gifted her with powers of endurance undreamed of by men. Chronic invalidism is not the normal condition of women.

THE GLEANER.

PRINCE GORTSCHAKOFF received Lord Dufferin very cordially.

PROF. ANDERSEN, the celebrated chess-player, died on March 14th, at Breslau, Silesia.

THE great ice-bridge which has provided a winter attraction for Niagara has almost disappeared.

THE late Duke of Newcastle is said to have insured his life in different offices to the astonishing amount of £500,000.

CHRISTMAS cards produced a revenue to the British Post Office this year of £20,000, against an extra expenditure of £700.

THE Queen's health is reported to be greatly shaken by the bereavement she has lately sustained in her family, and her visit to Italy is on the advice of her private medical attendants.

THE excavations at the supposed site of the hanging gardens at Babylon are said to have terminated. They have yielded many tablets from the time of Nabonidus to the Parthian era.

SIR GARNET WOLSELEY, in a speech delivered lately at the annual meeting in Nicosia of the Greek Club, expressed great confidence in the prosperous future in store for Cyprus.

A SURVIVOR of the Isandula massacre writes:—"I saw Col. Durnford fall, stabbed by an assegai. No man behaved more nobly. He stuck to his post to the last, and died as a hero."

BEFORE leaving Paris on the 8th ult., the Prince of Wales was shown the models of a complete table service in Sevres china which the French Government intend presenting to His Royal Highness as a souvenir of his presidency of the British Commission at the late Exhibition.

OUR CHESS COLUMN.

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

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. W. S., Montreal.—Many thanks for several valuable communications.

Student, Montreal.—Correct solution received of Problem No. 217.

R. F. M., Sherbrooke, P.Q.—Correct solution received of Problem No. 212, and also of Problem for Young Players, No. 209. Try No. 211 again.

W. A. L., Toronto.—Letter received. Will answer by post.

Tyro, Montreal.—White may have two Queens on the board at the same time.

J. H., Montreal.—Correct solution received of Problem for Young Players, No. 214.

M. J. M., Quebec.—Post card received. Many thanks We found it useful.

H. & J. McG., Cote des Neiges.—Correct solution received of Problem for Young Players No. 214.

We learn that lately H. R. H. Prince Leopold attended the celebration of the fifty-fifth anniversary of the Birkbeck Literary and Scientific Institution, London, Eng., and that he, also, kindly consented to distribute the prizes to the students.

The following extract from *Land and Water* gives such a pleasing account of what took place having reference to the Royal game, that we cannot refrain from inserting it in our Column.

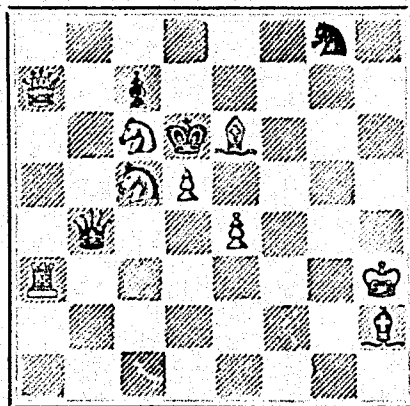
About 150 prize-winners came forward one by one to receive their trophies, and among them we counted as many as twenty-two ladies—a phenomenon which did not annoy us at all, but quite otherwise. All the recipients were assailed with hearty plaudits as they came before the Prince; but the appearance of Miss Louisa Rymor, as she stepped forward to receive the chess-board and men she had won, was hailed with a particularly loud and enthusiastic burst of applause. Whether she owed this ovation to her good looks, or to the fact of being a general favourite at the institution, or because the idea of a young lady still in her teens and yet carrying off the chess prize from masculine competitors naturally excited admiration, we cannot say; but the fact is as we have stated, and it was made the subject of remark by others besides ourselves. The address which the Prince delivered after the distribution was in every respect well worth listening to, as evincing a lofty and original tone of thought, while at the same time indicative of that intellectual benevolence which feels that knowledge must be for the happiness of all classes, and therefore wishes that the means of acquiring it may be placed within their reach. One of the most delicious parts of the Prince's speech was where he drew an analogy between chess and life, carrying out which idea he observed that "it is the opening, and the opening only, which is under our own control. Later in the game the plans and wishes of others begin to conduct unpleasantly with our own. Sometimes it is as much as we can do to avoid being checkmated altogether; but for the first few moves we are free. We can deploy our pieces to the best advantage, we can settle on the line of action which best suits our powers, and we sometimes find that it will repay us to sacrifice a Pawn, or a piece, so as to gain at once a position which may give us a decided advantage throughout the whole game. Does not this, too, remind us of early life? Most of us are not often content to sacrifice some Pawn of present pleasure or profit to gain a vantage ground which may help us to successes which self-indulgence could never have won?" Altogether we think that English chessists have some reason to be proud of their chess-playing Prince, for there is every reason to believe that, despite the disadvantages of his station, he will prove to be an original thinker and an effective speaker.

PROBLEM No. 219.

From "Supplement" to Chess Gems.

By H. E. Kildson.

BLACK.



WHITE

White to play and mate in three moves.

GAME 349TH.

(From the Chessplayers' Chronicle.)

CHESS IN MEXICO.

(Philidor's Defence.)

(Remove White's Q Kt from the Board.)

WHITE.—(A. C. Vasquez.)

BLACK.—(M. Vilaro)

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|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. P to K 4 | 1. P to K 4 |
| 2. K Kt to B 3 | 2. P to Q 3 |
| 3. B to Q B 4 | 3. B to K Kt 5 |
| 4. Castles | 4. B takes Kt (a) |
| 5. Q takes B | 5. Q to K B 3 |
| 6. Q to Kt 3 | 6. P to Kt 3 |
| 7. P to Q 4 | 7. P takes P |
| 8. P to K B 4 | 8. Q to K 2 |
| 9. B to Q 2 | 9. P to Q B 3 |
| 10. P to K 5 | 10. P to Kt 1 (b) |
| 11. P takes P (c) | 11. P takes B |
| 12. Q to Kt 4 | 12. Q to Q 2 (d) |
| 13. Q R to K sq (ch) | 13. K to Q sq |
| 14. Q to R 5 (ch) (e) | 14. K to R sq |
| 15. R to K 8 (ch) | 15. K to Q Kt 2 |
| 16. Q to Kt 4 (ch) | 16. K to R 3 |
| 17. Q takes P (ch) | 17. K to Kt 2 |
| 18. Q to Kt 4 (ch) | 18. K to R 3 |
| 19. R to K B 3 | Resigns |

NOTES BY G. B. FRASER.—(Condensed.)

(a) Q to K B 3 or Q R to B 3 would have proved more troublesome to the first player.

(b) Apparently his best move. It is evident that the Queen's Pawn cannot be advanced at this stage, without disadvantage.