

accompanied by violent pains in the chest and limbs. For a moment I could not remember where I was, or what had happened. All was dark around me, but on one side the grey light of morning stole in through a large opening. Gradually all the horrors of the past night revived in my memory. Where had I got to? The place was damp and cold; my teeth chattered in my head. I was still lying on the ground. In moving, my hand encountered a substance colder than the ground: it was hard; it rose from the level; it felt like an iron bar. I felt further on, and encountered a similar one. This subterranean place—that arched opening through which the light was creeping—I understood it all: *I was in a railway tunnel.* I was literally lying between the lines! What a frightful situation! If a train had passed I must inevitably have been crushed to death.

With a cold perspiration starting from every pore, and my hair bristling with terror at the fearful peril that had menaced me, I endeavoured to rise to my feet. What was my horror on finding that my limbs were powerless! The unnatural exertion I had used, and the cold damps of the tunnel, had rendered me as helpless as a new-born infant. I fell back with a groan, to await the awful doom that was impending over me. The thoughts, feelings, agonies that I endured, as I lay thus, no human tongue could describe. With the thought of my poor wife and children at home burning into my brain, I tried to offer up a prayer, and resign myself to my inevitable fate.

I could now see, through the opening of the tunnel, that it was broad daylight, and a certain brilliancy denoted that the sun had risen. All was deadly still. Presently I heard the twittering of the birds. Oh, it was horrible to die thus! I made another effort to rise and stand upright.

A low, subterranean rumbling sound, like the distant rolling of cannon-balls, broke upon my ear. Each second it increased in intensity, till it resembled the falling of an avalanche; then a shrill, piercing whistle; then a rushing sound. Suddenly the opening of the tunnel was darkened, and, in place of the soft daylight, a fierce, red spot shone like the eye of a demon. There was another horrible shriek of the whistle, and the monster was upon me. Then there was a crushing sense of pain, and I swooned again.

When I recovered I was in my own bed, with my wife beside me. It was long before I quitted my room. My leg had been completely smashed, and an operation had been necessary. My wooden leg is a constant reminder of my terrible adventure, and I confess to an involuntary shudder at the sight or sound of a rapid railway train.

CHESS-PLAYING.

THE first book printed in England in moveable types was a translation by William Caxton of a famous Italian work on chess. This seems to show that "the pleasant and witty playe of the Cheests" was even more popular four hundred years ago than it is now. Considering how few persons could read, how much opposition was offered to the printing-press, and how great was the risk of publication, it is difficult on any other supposition to account for Caxton having, in 1474, made choice of this subject for his first experiment. But, however this may have been, the volume that issued from the abbot's house in Westminster could not but give a considerable stimulus to English chess-playing. The original from which it was taken had been acquiring increased celebrity during 270 years, and certainly contained much curious and valuable information. Of course it had its own theory of the origin of chess, which will ever remain matter of dispute; and it tells so pretty a story on that head, that every one who reads it wishes it may be the true account. A philosopher, it says, named Philometer, invented it in the time of Evilmerodach, King of Babylon, with the view of conveying to his Majesty in an inoffensive manner a lesson in the uses of mercy. Thus the game taught by showing that kings, queens, knights, and common pawns, had each their proper places and relative duties, and that the

pawns, far from being on the whole inferior pieces, constituted in fact, when well managed, the strength of the game. The lesson was much needed, for the king was "so tyrannous and felon, that he might suffer no correction, but slew them, and put them to death, that corrected him." Happily Philometer's good design was completely successful. He not only kept his head on his shoulders, but the king "thanked him greatly, and changed his life, his manners, and alle his evil condicions." Another account of the origin of chess is, that, during the siege of Troy, Palamedes invented it for the Grecian soldiers, to enable them to kill time, which hung rather heavily on their hands. Hence, when Labourdonnais established the first Chess-Magazine, in 1836, he called it *Le Palamede*. But after Niebuhr has ridden rough-shod over all the fables of the she-wolf that suckled Romulus and Remus, the Goddess Egeria, and the like, one is apt to be very suspicious of any story that dates from Priam and the Trojan horse. There is an old English black-letter translation from the Italian on this ancient game, which assigns to it a curious origin. Lydie and Tyrrhene, it says, were two brothers, "who, being afflicted with great hunger and famine, did invent this playe, to the end that in playinge of it they myghte employe their spirities so vehementlye that they myghte more easilye passe the faminall affliction." "Indecede," it adds, "they passed the tyme so well that they made but three meales in two days." In our present prospects of murrain and scarcity, it may perhaps be worth consideration, how far a passion for chess would serve us also as a *pièce de résistance* in the assaults of famine.

But Lydie and Tyrrhene are far from being the only witnesses to the absorbing influence of chess. The last of the Caliphs continued deep in the game while the enemy was at the gates of Bagdad, and cried out, when warned of his danger, "Let me alone, for I see a move to checkmate my opponent;" and a messenger, who came to the Danish Court on urgent business, found King Canute engaged in it at midnight. The fire-eating monarch, Charles XII, of Sweden, used very characteristically to push the king forward, and make more use of it than of any piece on the board. In this way he often exposed himself to checkmate, as by similar hazards in the field he frequently endangered his kingdom. When he was besieged in his house at Bender, with a few adherents, by a whole army of Turks, Voltaire tells us that he barricaded the doors, looked to the defences, and then was sufficiently composed to sit down to chess, and expose his king as before. In some parts of Europe, in the Middle Ages, the devotion to chess was so excessive, and withdrew persons to such an extent from their honest calling, that the authorities, civil and ecclesiastical, thought it needful to interfere. Eudes de Sully, Bishop of Paris, forbade clergymen to play or keep a board; and St. Louis of France visited chess-playing with a fine. Such discouragements, however, have been very rare and partial, and chess, like the chase, has ever been esteemed a princely recreation. Charlemagne played at it while governing half Europe, and some ivory chessmen, said to have been used by him, are preserved at St. Denis. Tamerlane built an obelisk of 90,000 heads which he had cut off, yet, in his softer moods, diverted himself with chess. Philip II, of Spain, and Charles V, his father, found time for chess amid their wars and conquests; so did Catharine de Medicis and Henry IV, of France. Leo X, to his love of arts added that of chess; and Queen Elizabeth, Louis XIV, William III, and Frederick the Great, the most notable sovereigns of modern times, were all skilled in the Indian game. We call it Indian, for antiquaries are now unanimous in their opinion that it was unknown to the Greeks and Romans, and was invented, as Gibbon says, in India, to admonish kings that they are strong only in the strength of their subjects, and was introduced into Persia in the reign of Nushivran, about the middle of the sixth century.

Some three hundred years ago, Leonardo, a Calabrian, accomplished a singular feat. Having set out for Madrid, where he intended to challenge the great chess-player, Ruy Lopez, he heard that his brother had been taken by some corsairs.

He determined to ransom him, and actually won his ransom by playing chess with the captain of the galley, in which his captive brother was sitting chained to the oar. He then proceeded to Madrid, and, in the presence of the Court, had the satisfaction of beating Father Ruy Lopez, who was esteemed the best player in Europe, and had composed a valuable treatise "on the liberal invention and art of chess." In its palmy days the game was sometimes played with real men and women on a chequered pavement of black and white marble. Don John of Austria had such a chess-board, on which living pieces moved under his direction. A Duke of Weimar also converted his soldiers into chessmen, and managed them in a similar way. Sometimes the field of action was a level turf, divided into sixty-four squares of alternate gravel and grass. There is a curious anecdote related of an Eastern sovereign in connection with the chess-board. Wishing to reward the services of his Prime Minister, he desired him to choose a present. The Minister replied that he would be satisfied with one grain of corn on the first square of the board, two on the second, four on the third, and so on, doubling each time till the last square was reached. The Sultan laughed in scorn at so paltry a demand; but, on his Minister's insisting that he desired nothing more, he summoned his secretaries, and was amazed at being informed that his dominions would not yield the quantity of grain required, nor his entire resources suffice to purchase it. In the year 1785, the game of chess was made the means of a famous hoax. A certain Kempelen exhibited what he called an automaton chess-player in London. It was a figure dressed as a Turk, and placed behind a chest. This Kempelen used to open, so as to display the machinery which seemed to impart motion to the Turk while playing intricate games with any of the spectators. But the marvellous nature of the machinery was at last exploded, and the inventor fared no better than the brothers Davenport have fared in Paris. It was discovered that the chest concealed a full-grown man, who could stretch his arms down the "automaton," and direct its movements in the game. The machinery was all a feint, and intended only to disarm suspicion. There was another and a more honourable "automaton chess-player" in London in 1820. The living player was M. Mouret; he was concealed with great skill, and many of his games are still on record. The celebrity which he obtained contributed to the formation of chess clubs, which have led to the establishment of the British Chess Association, and the reduction of the laws of chess into a fixed and recognised code.

A peculiar combination of mental faculties is necessary to attain great proficiency in the game; but a man may be a first-rate player without being in other respects remarkably clever. There is something quite magical in the strategy and forethought of a great adept. A Saracen named Buzzecca came to Florence in 1266, and played with three persons at one time, seeing only one of the boards. Sacchieri, the mathematical professor at Pavia, played four games at a time, without having any of them before his eyes, and he remembered, and could set down if required, every move that had been made from the commencement of the game. Philidor's feats in the last century are too well known to be repeated; but they yield in importance to the surprising instances of skill we have seen in our own day. Morphy has played eight games of chess at a time without seeing the boards, and Paulsen, another American, has played twelve under similar circumstances. Morphy's games, though fewer in number, were of a higher order than those of Paulsen. An old Spanish writer, Don Pietro Carrern, recommends players, in order to win, "to avoid filling their bellies with superfluous food, because fulness is contrary to speculation, and obfuscates the sight." "Those persons," he adds, "are praise-worthy who, previous to playing, clear their heads by medicines, which have the virtue of rendering the spirits pure and subtle;" but unless the medicine comes to them in some agreeable shape, few of our readers, we suspect, will feel inclined to follow the prescription.