

READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

AT A DINNER OF ARTISTS.

(National Academy, April 8, 1890.)

"The Romans had a frivolous fashion of crowning their brows with roses, in *convivio*; the ancient Egyptians had the solemn custom of having a death's-head at their feasts. Which of these pagan races was the wiser—the one that forgot itself in life, or the one that remembered itself of death?"

SITTING beside you in these halls to-night,  
 Begirt with kindly faces known so long,  
 My heart is heavy though my words are light,  
 So strangely sad and sweet are art and song.  
 Twin sisters, they, at once both bright and dark,  
 Clinging to coming hours and days gone by  
 When hope was jubilant as a morning lark,  
 And memory silent as the evening sky.  
 Where are the dear companions, yours and mine,  
 Whom for one little hour these walls restore,  
 Courteous and gracious, of a noble line,  
 And happy times that will return no more?  
 Farewell and hail! We come, and we depart:  
 I, with my song (ah! me); you, with your art.

—R. H. Stoddard, in *The Century for July*.

ROMANCE REDUCED TO FIGURES.

THERE is an English literary man who, at the end of each year, penetrates into the published fiction and extracts therefrom very often some exceedingly interesting figures. The results of his researches into last year's fiction are entertaining. Of the heroines portrayed in novels, he finds 372 were described as blondes, while 190 were brunettes. Of the 562 heroines, 437 were beautiful, 274 were married to the men of their choice, while 30 were unfortunate enough to be bound in wedlock to the wrong man. The heroines of fiction, this literary statistician claims, are greatly improving in health, and do not die as early as in previous years, although consumption is still in the lead among fatal maladies to which they succumb. Early marriages, however, are on the increase. The personal charms of the heroines included 980 "expressive eyes" and 792 "shell-like ears." Of the eyes, 543 had a dreamy look, 390 flashed fire, while the remainder had no special attributes. Eyes of brown and blue are in the ascendant. There was found to be a large increase in the number of heroines who possessed dimples; 502 were blessed with sisters and 342 had brothers. In 47 cases mothers figured as heroines, with 112 children between them. Of these 71 children were rescued from watery graves. Eighteen of the husbands of these married heroines were discovered to be bigamists, while 7 husbands had notes found in their pockets exposing "everything." And thus is the romance of a year reduced to figures.—*Ladies' Home Journal*.

A VISIT TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WE are going to the House to-night. Sir Frederick has an important Bill coming on in the evening, and wishes us to hear the debate. He goes down early, and sends us tickets for the Speaker's Gallery, to which one gains admittance only by a card from Mrs. Peel. We climb many steps, and a benign elderly person in knee-breeches and a great gold insignia of office shows us into a grated cage that looks down over the house, which is quite full. At one side of us, a bit lower, is the Ladies' Gallery, grated like our own. I wonder if they fear we shall get into mischief that they cage us up like monkeys? We are directly over the Speaker, and see only the canopy of his chair, the curly white wigs of his three clerks, and the enormous gold mace. On the tier below is the reporters' gallery—fagged, hard-worked looking men, who scribble furiously. One can see what they are doing quite well, and it is noticeable that most of them write in long hand. Their account of the debate is to be found in the *Times* next day, and the speeches as given by them are far more succinct and forcible than when the members delivered them. Opposite is the gallery for distinguished strangers, and crosswise run the galleries for the peers. From time to time some one drops in from the House of Lords—now also in session—and stays to hear a portion of the debate. Now it is a portly, florid old gentleman who listens with his hand behind his ear; and now some slim, pink-cheeked boy just succeeded to the title, immaculately arrayed in evening dress, with a pink peony in his button-hole. The Conservatives sit on the green-cushioned benches to the right of the Speaker; the ministers in front. Mr. Arthur Balfour, Secretary for Ireland, is speaking when we enter. A tall, slender man, with little silken brown ripples all over his head; good-looking, calm, and faultlessly dressed; and with delicate, slender hands, which he rests on the desk before him as he speaks, very languidly, but clearly, and with a slight hesitation. They are talking about Ireland as usual. On the bench from which he has just risen sit Lord George Hamilton, also handsome, tall, and dark-haired; Mr. W. H. Smith, leader of the House, whose head is very large and quite bald; Mr. Goschen; and the rest of the ministers. Behind sit the Conservatives, a fine body of men, extremely well set up, wearing glossy silk hats, and looking, on the whole, rather indifferent and bored, grinding out an occasional "Hear! hear!" when Mr. Balfour makes a point against his opponents. This gentleman is saying in polite parliamentary phrases, and with a somewhat fatigued manner, that he considers his accusers liars, one and all. When he is done, Mr. Gladstone takes the word, rising from the opposite benches, and looking extremely white and feeble, speaking

keenly and to the point, in the trembling, squeaky tones used by the sage old man. Close beside him is Lord Hartington, with his hat tipped over his eyes, his legs thrust out, and his hands in his pockets. Further back, among the Irishmen, is Bradlaugh, the famous infidel, rosy and genial, and very like the late Henry Ward Beecher in appearance. Finally the Irishmen get on their feet one after another—Dillon, O'Brien, Parnell—and scream fluently and vituperatively at Mr. Balfour, who looks over his notes and pretends not to hear them. Sir George Trevelyan, nephew of Macaulay, speaks on the Irish side with the polished roundness of the elocutionist; and a certain Mr. Fowler, with his laconic severity, brings a flush to Balfour's forehead and makes him stir angrily. In the gallery with us is a large handsome old lady with much white lace around her head. Lady B—whispers to me it is Mrs. Gladstone, who is known as the Stormy Petrel, for there is sure to be trouble brewing when she appears. It is rumoured to-night that her husband hopes to cut the Government majority on the Land Purchase Bill down lower than it has ever yet been. She shows little excitement, but watches affairs attentively through the grating. On one side of us sits a slim girl in red, so interested in the debate that she has thrown off her hat and gloves, and pushed back her hair from her forehead. She holds the bars with both little white hands, and will not miss a word—a high-bred, pretty creature, evidently an ardent Conservative, who gives us much information in whispers as to members and the state of the Bill. On the other side sits one I take to be an American from her excessively perfect raiment and her little rising inflections. At ten minutes of eight the Speaker declares a recess of half-an-hour, and the members troop out to dine.—*Miss Elizabeth Bisland, in Harper's Bazar*.

IN GLAD WEATHER.

I do not know what skies there were,  
 Nor if the wind was high or low;  
 I think I heard the branches stir  
 A little, when we turned to go:  
 I think I saw the grasses sway  
 As if they tried to kiss your feet—  
 And yet, it seems like yesterday,  
 That day together, sweet!

I think it must have been in May;  
 I think the sunlight must have shone;  
 I know a scent of springtime lay  
 Across the fields: we were alone.  
 We went together, you and I;  
 How could I look beyond your eyes?  
 If you were only standing by  
 I did not miss the skies!

I could not tell if evening glowed,  
 Or noonday heat lay white and still  
 Beyond the shadows of the road:  
 I only watched your face, until  
 I knew it was the gladdest day,  
 The sweetest day that summer knew—  
 The time when we two stole away  
 And I saw only you!

—Charles B. Going, in *July Scribner*.

A CHECK UPON EARLY MARRIAGES.

A VARIETY of arguments, based on science, prudence, and economy, have often been urged against the headlong folly of very early marriage. Reasoning of this kind, however, has unfortunately but little influence with such as those who commit the folly in question, for, indeed, it is not reason in any recognisable degree which guides their crude calculations. If it were, the probability of overstrain in child-birth, which is the natural counterpart of early functional activity, of domestic discord and beggary, and their too common social accompaniments, would not be so freely and frequently encountered. These matters are part of the tribute which will always be paid, while, for the want of native sense and sound home training, fancy is allowed to guide one of the most important concerns of life. The one available means of cure for this prevalent evil consists in a just exercise of parental control, but this, we need hardly remind ourselves, is only too easy of evasion. In a case lately reported to the Holborn Board of Guardians a juvenile couple and their infant, already dependent on the rates, were said to have been married by the Superintendent Registrar on receipt of a forged notice of consent purporting to have come from the girl's father. The lesson thus conveyed was not lost on the Board, which decided to notify the Registrar-General as to the wisdom of instructing an official to make personal enquiry in all such cases respecting the wishes of the parents in regard to the matrimonial ventures of their children under adult age. The proposal is certainly a sound one, and represents the minimum of justifiable interference on the part of a society which regards its own most natural interests.—*Lancet*.

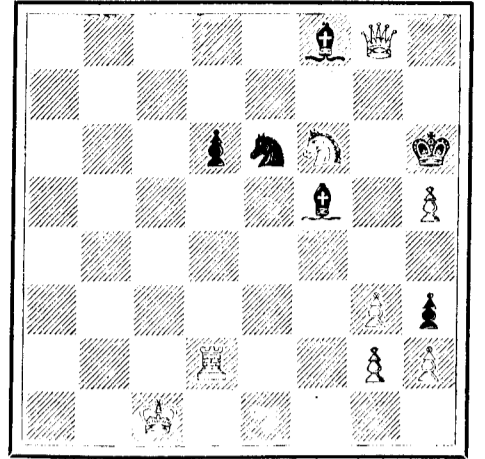
THE woman in sight is the woman wanted; that is the terrible power of actresses.—*Balzac*.

ONE of the "precious uses" of adversity is, that it is a great reconciler; that it brings back averted kindness, and causes yesterday's enemy to fling his hatred aside, and hold out a hand to the fallen friend of old days.—*Thackeray*.

CHESS.

PROBLEM No. 481.

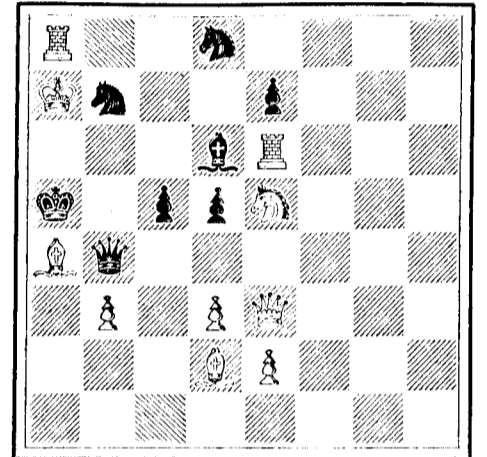
By K. KONDELIE, Svetovor.  
 BLACK.



WHITE.  
 White to play and mate in three moves.

PROBLEM No. 482.

By J. C. J. WAINWRIGHT, Birmingham, Eng.  
 BLACK.



WHITE.  
 White to play and mate in two moves.

SOLUTION TO PROBLEMS.

No. 475.

White.

1. Kt-Q 3
2. B-Q 5
3. Q x P mate
2. Q x R +
3. R x B mate

No. 476.

Black.

1. R from R5-K 5
2. K x B
1. R-B 4
2. P x Q

Q-K B 2

With other variations.

GAME BETWEEN HERR E. LASKER OF BERLIN, AND MR. H. W. TRENCHARD OF LONDON.

The score and notes are from the London Eng., *Central Times*.

EVANS GAMBIT.

White.	Black.
Herr E. Lasker.	Mr. H. W. Trenchard.
1. P-K 4	1. P-K 4
2. B-B 4	2. B-B 4
3. K Kt-B 3	3. Q Kt-B 3
4. P-Q Kt 4	4. B x Kt P
5. P-B 3	5. B-B 4
6. Castles	6. P-Q 3
7. P-Q R 4 (a)	7. Kt-B 3 (b)
8. P-Q 4	8. P x P
9. P x P	9. B-Kt 3
10. B-Q Kt 5	10. P-Q R 3! (c)
11. B x Kt +	11. P x B
12. P-R 5	12. B-R 2
13. Q-B 2	13. B-Q 2
14. P-K 5	14. P x P
15. B-R 3	15. P-B 4
16. P x K P?	16. Kt-Q 4
17. R-Q 1	17. Kt-Kt 5
18. B x Kt	18. P x B
19. P-K 6!	19. P x P
20. Kt-K 5	20. Castles! (d)
21. R x B	21. Q-B 3
22. Kt-Kt 4!	22. Q x R
23. Kt-R 6 +!	23. K-R 1
24. Kt-B 7 +	24. R x Kt
25. R x R	25. Q x P
26. R x B P	26. B-Kt 3 (e)
27. R-K 7	27. P-Kt 6 (f)
28. R-K 4	28. R-K B
29. Q x K P	29. R x P!
30. R-K 8 +	30. R-B dis +
31. K-R	31. B-B 4! (g)
32. P-R 1	32. Q-Kt 5
33. P-Kt 3	33. P-Q R 4
34. P-R 5	34. R x R
35. Q x R +	35. B-B 1
36. P-R 6	36. Q-K 2!
37. P x P +	37. K x P
38. Q-Kt 5	38. Q-K 8 +
39. K-Kt 2	39. Q x Kt

And after a prolonged contest, Black won (h).

NOTES.

- (a) An unusual move at this stage, and premature till White has played P-Q 4.
- (b) Mr. Trenchard thinks he ought to have played 7 \* \* K-R 4.
- (c) The only move to save the piece.
- (d) Best. The way Black conducts his game is worthy of high commendation.
- (e) Necessary to avert the mate and free the R.
- (f) Here we would prefer 27 \* \* Q-Q B 4, forcing the exchange of Queens, with an easily won game. 27 \* \* R-K B would be met by 28 K-R.
- (g) 31 \* \* Q-B 4 would lose a piece!
- (h) As interesting a game as we have seen for a long time.