

ST. JOHN'S FIRE.

ON Midsummer Day, the festival of St. John the Baptist, a singular custom is observed in most of the countries of the Continent of Europe, which is a relic of the pagan rites of antiquity. A pile of fagots and brush-wood is elaborately built up, and decorated with fruits and flowers by way of offering, which is lighted in presence of the civil and religious authorities with much pomp and ceremony; and around which the population of the town or village dance, whilst the most active leap over the flames in couples.

The ashes, charcoal, and small unconsumed twigs are collected with much care, as charms or talismans against various evils. The crowning wreath of flowers is especially prized, and the young maidens wear the faded blossoms round their necks, suspended by a red woollen thread.

In Provence, in the vicinity of the mountains, on the morning of St. John the Baptist's Day, the inhabitants rise at daybreak to watch the rising of the sun. As soon as it appears, it is welcomed with shouts of joy, and the sound of bells and trumpets from all quarters. But during the interval that elapses between the dawn and the appearance of the star of day, the pilgrims busy themselves with collecting aromatic plants, which, upon their return home, they put into flasks of olive oil. This infusion they regard as a specific against various diseases, and especially wounds. The festival of the day concludes with the lighting a large bonfire, around which they dance the *falandoula*.

At Ciotat, in the same province, the signal for lighting the fire is given by the firing of a cannon, and while its flames rise high into the air the young men throw themselves into the sea and sprinkle each other, in commemoration of the baptism in the river Jordan.

At Brest some three or four thousand persons assemble in the evening upon the *glacis*. Children, workmen, and sailors, all carry a lighted torch, or *link*, in their hands, which they whirl rapidly about in various directions. It is a curious sight to observe from a distance, amid the gloom of night, thousands of lights carried by invisible hands, sparkling and moving in every capricious direction.

In Brittany, upon the approach of night, a fire suddenly appears on the loftiest rock or mountain; the signal is immediately taken up, and then a second, and a third, a hundred, a thousand even, are soon seen blazing in every direction. The earth seems to have as many stars as the sky above. Presently a confused noise, or roar, is heard, joyful in its character, but most strange music, amid which singular metallic sounds and vibrations of harmony mingle, produced by children, who rattle canes against the sides of copper basons. The horns of the shepherds respond from valley to valley; peasants sing carols before the cawrics; and young maidens, clothed in their best attire, hasten to dance around the fires of St. John, for they are told that if they dance around *nine* fires on this eve before midnight they will be married before the year is out. The shepherds make their flocks pass over the embers of the sacred fire as a protection against disease. Then the assembled crowd form a ring, and dance around the flickering fire, shouting and screaming like mad. Empty seats are arranged around the fire; they are intended for the souls of the departed, who are supposed to come and listen to the songs, and watch the dance.

In the month of June the Greeks celebrated in honour of Diana a festival they called *Lophrica*, and on the day of the summer solstice they lighted bonfires. This custom is perpetuated to modern times, although the object of it is entirely changed.

PASTIMES.

PUZZLE.

Take one-fourth of five and not any more,  
Add two-thirds of ten as you've oft done before;  
Next add a unit, place one hundred near,  
Then one-fifth of seven will make all quite clear.  
'Tis a city in Europe; the name's not very long  
But its praises are sung in a favourite song.

HATTIE.

ARITHMOREM.

1. 1100 and he brogs = a general under the Prince of Orange.
2. 6 " a hone = one of the Waverly novels.
3. 1000 " O! roe = one of Shakespeare's heroes.
4. 501 " sworn = a town in Upper Canada.
5. 551 " beg here = a town in Germany.
6. 51 " roek = a seaport of Asia minor.
7. 152 " U here! = a prime minister of France.
8. 1500 " say hen = a governor general of Canada.
9. 650 " son grips = a village in Western Canada.
10. 1001 " ha!!! = a division of Chinese Tartary.
11. 500 " wear 500 = a line of English kings.
12. 550 " ana U = a town of Rhenish Bavaria.
13. 1050 " sun go at noon = a Danish astronomer and pupil of Tycho Brahe.

The initials form the name of a celebrated astronomer, and the finals one of his discoveries.  
R. T. B.

CHARADES.

1. If my second is allowed to grow in my first, my whole will be the inevitable result.
2. My first is found in the sea, my second is found in the sea, and my whole is found in the sea.
3. I am a word of nine letters.  
My 8, 5, 1, 2 is what every one would like to be.  
My 6, 7, 3, 4 belongs to a flame.  
My 2, 3, 8, 4, 5, 7 is a solitary person.  
My 9, 3, 6 is what gentlemen like to hear when they pop the question.  
My 6, 1, 2, 5, 6, 4 should always be avoided.  
And my whole is an important science.

G. K. S.

ENIGMA.

Beauteous forms of grace and ease  
The eye delight, the fancy please—  
In grace, in beauty, I abound,  
But 'tis my boast I'm useful found,  
E'en on your cook each passing day  
(Though sculptors to me homage pay);  
And yet sometimes when I appear,  
She frets and fumes with sudden fear,  
And casts me from her stores, I fear,  
Where I'm too apt, perhaps to grow;  
Where the rose, the pimpernel  
Bloom in fragrance, there I dwell.  
Ladies, do you delight to trace  
Your lineage to an ancient race?  
Vain mortals! cast aside your pride;  
Know that to me you are allied.

ACROSTIC.

1. One of the books of the New Testament.
2. An ocean.
3. Something we all like
4. One of us two.
5. A girl's name.
6. A celebrated poet.
7. An exclamation.
8. A portion of time.

The initials will give the name of a town in Canada.  
HATTIE.

ARITHMETICAL PROBLEM.

A father divided his money equally between his two sons; both of them were in debt and both of them resolved at once to pay what they owed. One of them expended in this way \$15,600, the other \$1200; after which the latter found himself seven times as rich as the former. What was the entire sum left by the father?

ANSWERS TO DECAPITATIONS, &c., No. 33.

- Decapitations.—1. Sark-ark. 2. Keel-eel. 3. Speck-peck. 4. Pear-ear. 5. Gnat-nat-at.  
Charades.—1. Cur-few. 2. Mar-grave. 3. Wo-man.

- Enigma.—Empty-mpy-mpt-mt.  
Names of countries.—1. Chin-a. 2. S-pain.  
3. Ire-land. 4. Can-ada. 5. Green-land. 6. Tun-is.

- Square words.—H a n d.  
A g u e.  
N u m b.  
D e b t.

- Arithmetical Problems.—1. 41 guineas, 86 crowns. 2. Grandfather 84, father 63, and son 36 years. 3. Cost £50, sold for £40.

The following answers have been received:  
Decapitations.—E. H. Festus, H. H. V., Camp, R. T. B., Flora, Jos. T.

Charades.—Presto, Cloud, E. H., Flora, Vigalent, Argus, H. H. T.

Enigma.—Argus, Camp, Ellen S., H. H. V.  
Names of Countries.—R. T. B., E. H., Argus, Flora, Camp.

Square Words.—E. H., Vigalent, Presto, Mentor.

Arithmetical Problems.—Presto, Argus, Mentor.

The following were received too late to be acknowledged in our last issue. E. H., Fannie A., Gordon W., Memo.

CHESS

BREVITY AND BRILLIANCY IN CHESS.

With great pleasure we are able to announce that a new work on Chess, under the above title, is now in press, to be shortly brought out by the Appletons, and when we have announced that house as the publishers, we can give no higher guarantee that it will appear in the very highest style of typographical excellence, in every particular. Chessically, as its name implies, it consists of games short and brilliantly contested; with the additional interest, that they all have problem terminations, ranging from two to twelve moves, all on diagrams. It has, also, other interesting features. Culled from the whole range of Chess literature, and edited by Miron J. Hazeltine. Eq. 12mo., (about) pp. 300.—N. Y. Clipp.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. H. C., WASHINGTON, D. C.—Thanks for your kind wishes, as well as the promise that accompanied them, which we trust will be soon redeemed. The solution is correct.

J. C. BOMEYN, KINGSTON, N. Y.—Hope to report progress on that Problem shortly. You deserve, and shall have a hard nut to crack in return. Many thanks for the enclosure. Some of the back numbers have been mailed to your address.

PROBLEM No. 20.—Correct solutions received from H. K. C., Quebec; and Alma, Brantford; too late for acknowledgment last week.

PROBLEM No. 21.—Correct solutions received from St. Urbain St.; J. McL.; C. C. H.; Rook, Hamilton; R. B. Toronto; and H. K. C., Quebec.

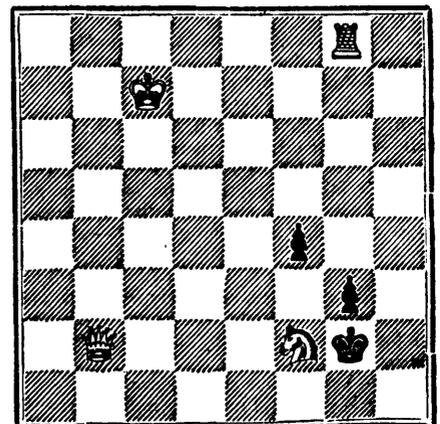
SOLUTION OF PROBLEM No. 21.

- | WHITE.                | BLACK.                 |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. B to K 5th.        | F to Kt 5th or (abcd.) |
| 2. Q to R 7th Mate.   |                        |
| (a) 1. _____          | F takes Kt.            |
| 2. B to B 5th Mate.   |                        |
| (b) 1. _____          | K takes Kt.            |
| 2. Q takes B Mate.    |                        |
| (c) 1. _____          | B to B 6th.            |
| 2. Q takes B Mate.    |                        |
| (d) 1. _____          | Anything else.         |
| 2. Kt Mates at B 3rd. |                        |

PROBLEM No. 23.

We are unable to give the author of this neat and difficult stratagem.

BLACK.

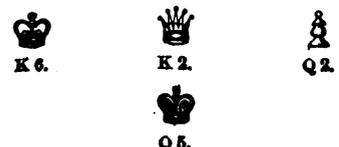


WHITE.

White to play and Mate in three moves.

ENIGMA No. 2.

From Alexander's "Beauties of Chess."



White to play and Mate in three moves.