

FRAGRANT BLOOM.

O, roses red and white, that glow
In summer glory at her door.
Fade, fall and die, that winter snow
May speed the springtime home once more!

O, roses red and white, that shine
Stars on the nimbus of her hair.
Tell her that all your thorns are mine,
Her tokens in my heart to wear!

O, roses red and white, that climb
About the windows of her room.
Breathe her the burden of my rhyme
In silent speech of fragrant bloom!

DARKNESS.

Dark masses of angry clouds drift swiftly across
A sullen sky. One, blacker than the rest, over-
rides them, shaped like a gigantic fiend.

I accept this presage; she is a human soul and
escaping from a legion of tormenting devils into
boundless space.

It is long past midnight. Soon the intermi-
nable chimes of the old church clock will play
again, and it will strike "One!" the knell of a
departed soul.

My preparations are perfect, I think. I should
have liked to challenge the opinion of a world
that dealt hardly with me, by asserting the con-
viction which has slowly shaped itself from a
contradictory crowd of perplexing dogmas and
superstitious beliefs.

It is clear to me that when the always doubt-
ful boon of an unasked existence becomes a bur-
den and a curse, it is but right and fair the suf-
ferer should relieve himself of it if he see fit.

But the world is not ready for my creed; and
for the sake of the few friends whom I should
grieve to shock and pain, I suppress it.

A long letter to my brother lies unfinished on
my desk; a cheerful, chatty epistle, in which I
propose to meet him in town next week.

Yes; one thing remains. My housekeeper
knows I have suffered so much lately from neu-
ralgia, that for quite a month I have been com-
pelled to swallow several drops of laudanum to
induce sleep at night.

There are three rows of tiny bottles in this
chest; the fourth bottle in the first row contains
laudanum, the fourth in the second row prussic
acid.

I had this last bottle filled the other day, that
I might poison my dog—poor old Nero. He
died instantaneously—painlessly.

One last dying flicker, and a column of black
smoke rises from the red wick. The candle has
gone out, and it is so dark I can barely distin-
guish the outline of the medicine chest.

One sudden thrill of pain, sharp but short,
and I am falling backwards. My right hand
sinks awkwardly upon my breast, the clenched
fingers grip the wine-glass.

To what extent I cannot yet tell; my mind is
in a whirl; a crowd of undefinable sensations
overwhelm and perplex me.

As one miraculously born into the material
world—a man in stature, strength, intellect—an
infant in want of experience—so am I, hurried
unprepared into spiritual life.

As he, the man-babe, conscious of power, igno-
rant of its extent, might stretch covetous fingers
to grasp the sun—might try to leap a mountain,
yet make timorous circuits of a mole-hill, or
neglect the fruit within his reach—so shall I
essay, presently, to discover, by blundering ex-
periment, the conditions of this unknown ex-
istence.

I am aware of forces within me that struggle
vaguely towards action, but they are restrained
by fear—the fear of a blindfolded man who longs
to run.

I can see, or rather I have some subtle gift of
perception that is sight, and yet is not; for the
room is in darkness, and human sight would
fail.

More than this. I see through the solid walls
into the deserted square, down the narrow street
along the desolate shore, whereon the waves
beat, beat unceasingly.

I see every object memory recalls, one by one,
not as recollection might paint it, but with a
distinct perception of what is actually occurring
and I know instinctively that by a mere effort
of will I could pass to them, or to any strange
spot upon this earth, as the electric current
passes swiftly, and without noise.

That the old physical sight should be thus ex-
tended causes no thrill of surprise. A more
marvelous gift, that of spiritual vision, only im-
presses upon me the general fitness of things.

A world of spirits. They pass and repass;
they throng the room, the house, the silent
streets. Earth, air, ocean, are but three great
highways, wherein they come and go at pleasure.

They have a language that is not speech—a
language of which I am as yet ignorant as an un-
taught man of a foreign tongue. Yet as he, cast
upon some strange shore, might partially inter-
pret look, or tone or gesture, so did I receive
impressions.

But, oh, the loneliness! Strangers all, with
no welcome for him who came uncalled among
them. Surely, surely, the whisper of the Great
Unseen is borne by angel-messengers to dying
mortal ears, and they usher him into this spiri-
tland, and teach him its mysteries, but I entered
unsummoned.

A mark was set on Cain's brow, and he be-
came a wanderer on the face of the earth; so a
voice calls to me, the self-murderer, "Arise!
wander among thy fellows!" My punishment
has begun.

I stand by the bed, and look upon the rigid
face that just now was mine. Just now, or ages
ago? That old life, the griefs, the hopes, the
interests of it, are removed infinitely further
than childhood's pursuits from the grown man.

Ah, it is so! Not an action of mortal life,
not a sin, struggle, defeat, triumph, but memory
produces with complete clearness, only I regard
them dispassionately, from a height that dwarfs
and narrows into nothingness, as a minister of
state might note the progress of a childish game.

A little patience here, a little forbearance
there, a little boast in God's Providence, a little
thought of immortal interests hanging on weak
probationary threads, and I might have won.

That still, cold, up-staring face is nothing to
me, no more than worn-out clothes a man puts
off for the last time. I turn from it to pass in-
to the night.

Motion is but an effort of will, I am in the
open air, but whither shall I go? This horrible
loneliness! the more hard that I am in a
crowd.

My mind reverts to the old ties, between which
and me lies a still more cruel gulf. They can-

not stir me; I am utterly beyond, as a star is be-
yond its broken reflection in the suddenly dis-
turbed water of some clear pool; but I am com-
pelled to examine them, that I may clearly
know whether the pain they brought did indeed
overpower the sweetness, beyond mortal strength
to bear.

There were not many in the existence I have
left behind, only three; and of these, two did not
greatly influence me. I will look first at them.

Inland, over miles and miles of field, wood,
moor; over brooks, rivers, and a great canal,
that lies silent and spectral in the moonlight
(for the sky has cleared), to a distant town sleep-
ing in the shadow of a great hill.

It is two o'clock now, but my brother is not in
his bedroom. He occupies an easy-chair in the
study; the gas burns brightly; a money-market
review lies open on the table. I come behind,
and place my hands on his two shoulders. He
does not stir.

I see his thoughts. That is one of my new
powers. They are of stocks and shares, and of
a promising speculation on the morrow.

As I leave the room, I pass before a large
looking-glass; but it reflects no form.

For an instant only. Now I am looking on
her dear wrinkled face, on silver hair contrasting
with snowy pillow.

"Oh, mysterious country, neither mortal nor
immortal, wherein the soul, which cannot sleep,
disports itself whilst the body takes repose, can
I, a spirit, enter thee?"

We stand, as it were, on opposite shores, be-
tween which rolls the river of death; but I stretch
forth my arms, and call, and she answers. Her
dream has changed; it is of me now. I hear my
murmured name as I leave her.

Oh, mystery of pain, thou torturing fiend,
how often have I marvelled that the inscrutable
Divine goodness permitted these earthly existence,
but here, in the spirit-land, thy power is in-
creased a thousandfold, and I have yet a pre-
vision my agony is dull and feeble compared with
that to come.

That beautiful countenance, which with all
my mortal strength I loved so well, is now, as
then, the instrument of my torment. Then it
rose before me day and night, repeating the fact
a host of corroborative evidence confirmed, that
my passion was vain—hopeless.

Poor deluded fool and poor girl-mourner, to
whom the dawning day will bring grief unutter-
able, from the height of my far-removed spiri-
tual existence I pity both; and with all my
developed might I suffer.

Not because my earth-love cannot be part of
the spirit-life. Great as it was, it seems so small
a thing now. But I know it was the immortal
germ that might have been my greatest earthly
blessing, until in due time it followed me, puri-
fied, developed into this new life, which must
now be a loveless one through the ages. In that
Knowledge lies the pain.

How can I tell of it in the language of a left-
off existence? And as yet I have no other. It
has cruel refinements and ever-varying phases.
The myriad voices of nature, that speak so loudly
to some human beings, speak a thousand times
more loudly to me; and there are corresponding
influences of the unseen world only, that tell in
trumpet-tones of an offended Deity and of a dis-
tant horror of judgment, approaching with slow,
relentless tread.

I am an unholy soul, and they amongst whom
my present lot is cast are more or less impure.
Now and again a bright presence passes, on whom
I may not look; but I bow my head, and fall
prostrate. It is involuntary homage, paid to the
ministers of the Unseen. What, then, of the
guilty soul that may behold His visible face?

Why do these souls flee away—thousands, tens
of thousands? What terrible power holds my
feet that I cannot move? Let me struggle loose,
that I may escape, also!

Thank Heaven—blessed Heaven, a dream
only! May I be pardoned last night's intention!
It was laudanum I swallowed, after all, and I
must have fainted with emotion the instant I
had done so, passing from the swoon into sleep,
for now the glorious sun shines hopefully. How
could I mistake the bottle? I have time before
me.

HE PREFERRED TO WALK.—"She's pretty
hot, ain't she?" said a backwoodsman passenger,
addressing the engineer of a Mississippi steamer
that was racing with another boat.

"So-so," responded the engineer, as he hung
an additional wrench on the safety valve cord to
stop the steam escaping.

"I reckon we'll overtake that craft soon,"
pursued the passenger.

"That's about it," returned the engineer,
giving the cords another twitch and hallooing
through the trumpet to the fireman to "shove
her up."

"One hundred and ninety-five," hummed the
passenger, looking first at the gauge and then
at the boilers.

"That's about where she's rusticated," put
in the engineer.

Then the passenger ran his fingers through
his hair nervously and walked about the deck
for a few minutes, when he came back to the
engineer and observed:—

"Hadn't you better leave the boat go?"
"Can't do it. Must pass her."

"But s'posin' we should blow up?"
"Well," said the engineer, as he peeped over
the guard to see how fast he was gaining, "if it's
the will of Providence for this boat to blow up,
we'll have to stand it." Then he hallooed to the
fireman to roll up another cask of bacon and to
mix plenty of rosin with the coal and give her
a little more turpentine and oil.

The next moment there was a splash in the
river, but before the yawls could be lowered the
man had succeeded in reaching the shore, and
hallooed out:—

"Go on with the race. I guess I'll walk."

OUR CHESS COLUMN.

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

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. W. S., Montreal.—Letters and papers received
Thanks.
Student, Montreal.—Solution of Problem No. 187 re-
ceived. Correct.
H. H., Montreal.—We will publish as many of the
games as we can.

THE DOMINION CHESS ASSOCIATION CON-
GRESS.

The Tourney of the Dominion Chess Association Con-
gress has not yet been brought to a close. It began, as we
stated last week, on Tuesday, August 20th, and was con-
tinued throughout the week. A large number of games
have been finished, but there are still more than thirty
to be played, and upon these, as a matter of course, the
final results mainly depend. Subjoined we add a table
showing the score of each competitor at the close of the
week's contest:

Table with 4 columns: Name, Games Played, Games Won, Games still to be Played. Lists players like Howe, Hicks, Henderson, etc.

*Drawn games count as one-half.

We have just received from England the August num-
ber of the Chess Players' Chronicle. It is filled, as usual,
with matter most interesting to lovers of Chess, but want
of space just now prevents us from saying more than
merely calling attention to "Chess Notelets," which will
be read with much gratification by those who like to
know something of the history and historical associations
of their favourite pastime.

INTERNATIONAL POSTAL CARD TOURNEY.

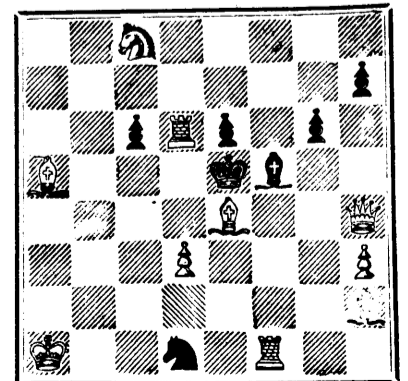
A month ago, or rather two months ago, the Hartford
Times published three games now in progress in this
Tourney, which it was inferred were so many wins for
America. The score is now even. One of the British
team has been seven weeks without an answer from his
American opponent; another has been only fourteen
weeks considering his next move. An intimation from
the leader of the American team "to move on" is neces-
sary. Next week we hope to publish a game in this
Tourney, with notes by Mr. Loyd. It finishes with the
announcement—mate in eight; almost as neat as the one
Mr. J. T. Palmer gave.

A CHALLENGE.

In a recent issue of the Scientific American, M. Loyd
makes the bold announcement that he will solve any two
problems in the time that it will take any one else to
solve one. He wishes to have a few friendly matches
at these odds, but prefers there should be no stake. We
suppose the challenge is to Americans only.

PROBLEM No. 190.

By J. W. ABBOTT.
BLACK.



WHITE
White to play and mate in two moves.