

AN INVISIBLE WOUND.

One of the most celebrated practitioners of Pesth, Dr. K., was called upon one morning to receive at an early hour a visitor in great haste, who, while waiting in the ante-chamber, sent in word by the footman that delay for him was danger. He must be received immediately.

The doctor threw on his dressing-gown hastily and had his patient shown in.

He found himself in the presence of a man utterly unknown to him, but who, to judge by his dress and manners, evidently belonged to the best society. His pale face bore traces of great physical and moral suffering. He carried his right hand in a sling, and in spite of his efforts to restrain himself, from time to time a stifled sigh escaped him. Seeing the poor man stagger the doctor invited him to sit down.

"I am tired. I have not slept for a week. There is something the matter with my right hand—I do not know what. Is it a carbuncle? Is it cancer? At first the suffering was slight, but now it is a burning, horrible, continual pain, increasing in intensity day by day. I can bear it no longer. I jumped into my carriage and here I am. I have come to beg you to cauterize it, or to cut out the painful part, for one more hour of this dreadful torture would drive me to perdition."

The doctor asked to see the hand, which the patient put into his, gnashing his teeth meanwhile from the intensity of pain, while the physician proceeded to undo the bandages with every possible precaution.

"Above all, doctor, I beg of you not to attach any importance to what you will see. My complaint is so strange that you will be surprised, but I beseech of you to take no notice of it."

"Where is the painful spot? It is surprising. I see nothing."

"Nor I either; and yet the pain there is so dreadful that I feel tempted to knock my head against the wall."

"The doctor took a magnifying-glass, examined, and shook his head.

"The skin is full of life. The blood circulates very regularly. Underneath there is neither inflammation nor cancer. It is as healthy as any other part of your body."

"And yet it seems to me that it is rather more red there than elsewhere."

"Where?"

The stranger took a pencil from his pocket-book and traced on his hand a circle as large as a ten-cent bit, with the remark, "Just here."

"The doctor looked. He began to think that his patient was crazy. "Remain here," he said. "In a few days I will cure you." The doctor saw to his astonishment that his strange visitor spoke seriously. He took off his coat, turned up his shirt-sleeves and took a bistoury in his left hand. A second more and the steel would have made a deep incision in the flesh.

"Stop!" cried the doctor, who was afraid that his patient through unskillfulness might open some important vein. "Since you judge the operation indispensable, so be it."

He took the bistoury, and holding in his left hand the right hand of the patient he begged him to turn away his head, some people not being able to bear the sight of their own blood.

"It is unnecessary! On the contrary, it is I who will indicate how deep down you will cut."

In fact, he watched the operation to the end with the greatest possible composure, indicating how far it was to go. The open hand did not even tremble in the doctor's hand, and when the little piece of round flesh was cut out he heaved a deep sigh, like one who experiences a feeling of immense relief.

"The burning pain has ceased?"

"It has quite gone," said the stranger with a smile. "The pain has entirely ceased, as if it had been taken away with the part cut out. The slight pain occasioned by the bleeding is, as compared with the other, like a refreshing breeze after an infernal heat. In does me really good to see my blood flow. Only let it flow, it does me so much good."

The stranger looked with delight at the streaming blood. The doctor was obliged to insist upon dressing the wound.

While he was binding it up the patient's face changed completely. The expression of pain passed away, he smiled on the doctor with a look full of good-humor, and there was no longer any contraction of the features, any look of despair. He seemed to have taken a new lease of life. His brow cleared; the color returned to his face; his whole person underwent a visible transformation.

When his hand was replaced in the sling he made use of the one that remained free to shake the doctor's hand warmly, saying to him with cordiality: "Accept my most sincere thanks. You have positively cured me. The small remuneration that I offer you is in no wise proportioned to the service you have rendered me. During the rest of my life I will try by what means I can discharge my obligation."

The doctor, however, would not consent to accept the thousand florins placed on the table. The stranger on his side refused to take them back; but seeing that the doctor was beginning to grow angry, he begged that he would bestow them on some hospital, and so took his leave.

The doctor informed several of his colleagues of this singular case and each formed a different opinion on the subject without, however, any of them being able to give a plausible explanation. Towards the end of a month Dr. K. received a letter dated from his patient's residence. He opened it. It was closely written and he saw by the signature that his patient had written it with

his own hand, from which he concluded that the pain had not returned, for if it had he could hardly have held a pen.

The letter ran as follows:

"MY DEAR DOCTOR—I do not wish that either you or medical science should be left in doubt, as to the mystery of the strange disease which will soon bring me to my grave—and even elsewhere.

"I am about to describe to you the origin of this terrible malady. It broke out a week ago and I can struggle against it no longer. At the present moment I can only manage to trace these lines by placing on the sensitive part a piece of lighted tinder, to serve as a cataplasm. As long as the tinder burns I do not feel the other pain—and it is as nothing in comparison.

"Six months ago I was still a very happy man. I lived, without care, on my income. I was on friendly terms with all the world, and I took pleasure in every thing that can interest a man of thirty-five. I had married a year ago, married for love, a most beautiful young girl of cultivated mind and with the best heart in the world who had been companion to a certain countess, my neighbor. My wife had no fortune, and the love she had for me was only gratitude, but also the genuine affection of a child. Six months passed in such a way that the morrow always seemed to me happier than the eve. If sometimes I was obliged to go to Pesth and leave my home for a day my wife had not a moment's peace. She would come two miles on the road to meet me. If I was belated she would stay awake all night waiting for me, and if, by dint of entreaty, she was prevailed upon to go and see her former mistress, who was still very fond of her, no power on earth could keep her there more than half a day, and even then her regrets for my absence put the others out of temper. Her fondness for me went so far as to make her give up dancing, so as not to be obliged to put her hand into a stranger's; and nothing caused her such grave displeasure as the compliments she was apt to receive. In a word, I had for my wife an innocent child, who had no thought but for me, and who would confess her dreams to me as enormous crimes if she had not dreamt of me.

"One day I know not what demon whispered in my ear. Supposing all this were only dissimulation? Men are mad enough to seek how they can torment themselves in the midst of the greatest happiness.

"My wife had a work-table, the drawer of which she kept carefully locked. I had noticed this several times. She never forgot the key, and never left the drawer open.

"The question ran in my head, 'What can she be hiding from me there?' I had taken leave of my senses. I no longer believed either in the innocence of her face or in the purity of her eyes, in her caresses or in her kisses. Suppose all that were nothing but hypocrisy?

"One morning the countess came again to fetch her, and after much entreaty succeeded in deciding her to spend the day with her. Our estates were some miles apart, and I promised my wife to go and join her.

"As soon as the carriage had left the courtyard I gathered together all the keys of the house and tried them in the lock of the little drawer. One of them opened it. I felt like a man committing his first crime. I was a thief about to surprise the secrets of a feeble woman. My hands trembled as I drew from the drawer, prudently, carefully, one by one, the objects contained therein, so that no confusion should betray that a strange hand had ransacked them. My breath heaved; I was well-nigh suffocated. Behold, suddenly, beneath a mass of lace, I had placed my hand on a packet of letters? I felt as if a flash of lightning had passed from my head to my heart. Alas! one glance told me what these letters were. They were love-letters!

"The packet was tied by a pink ribbon with a silver edge.

"As I touched the ribbon the thought occurred to me: Is this right? Is this worth of an honest man? To steal the secrets of a woman! Secrets which belong to the time when she was a young girl! Can I ask her to render an account of the thoughts she had before she belonged to me? Can I be jealous of a time when she did not know me! Who could suspect her of a fault? Who? I was base enough to do so, and the devil again whispered in my ear: 'Supposing that these letters were of a time when I had a right to all her thoughts, a right to be jealous even of her dreams, when she was already mine?' I untied the ribbon. No one saw me. There was not even a mirror in the room to make me blush for myself. I opened one letter, the another, and read them to the end.

"Oh! what a fearful hour that was for me! What did those letters contain? The vilest betrayal of which a man was ever yet the victim; and they were written by one of my most intimate friends! And in what a strain! What passion! What certainty of his love being shared! How he spoke of secrecy! What counsels he lavished on the art of deceiving a husband! And all these letters were of a time when I was married and perfectly happy! Shall I tell you how I felt? Imagine the intoxication caused by a deadly poison. I drank deeply of that poison. I read all the letters—all. Then I refolded them, retied the ribbon, replaced the packet and shut the drawer.

"I knew that if I did not go for her at 12 o'clock she would come back from the countess in the evening. And so it happened. She got down hastily from the carriage and ran towards me as I stood waiting for her on the steps. She kissed me with extreme tenderness and seemed

to be very glad to be with me again. I let nothing be seen on my face. We talked, we supped together and then retired to our separate bed-rooms. I did not close my eyes. Wide awake, I counted every hour. When the clock struck a quarter past midnight I got up and passed into her bedroom. There was the beautiful blonde head buried in the white pillows. It is thus that angels are depicted in the midst of white clouds. What a fearful lie was this on the part of Nature; vice with a face of such innocence! My resolution was taken. I had the stubbornness of the madman hunted by a fixed idea. The poison had corroded my whole soul.

"I placed my right hand gently under her throat and hastily strangled her. She opened for one moment her large, dark blue eyes, looked at me with astonishment, then closed them and died. She died without struggling against me, as if falling asleep. She was never angry with me, not even when I killed her. One drop of blood fell from her mouth on the back of my hand. You know where; I did not perceive it until the next day, when it had dried. We buried her without anyone suspecting the truth. I lived there in complete solitude; who was there to control my actions? She had neither relatives nor protectors to question me on the subject and I designedly put off writing to my friends, so that none of them could arrive in time.

"On coming back from the vault I did not feel the slightest weight on my conscience. I had been cruel, but she deserved it. I did not hate her; I could forget her; I hardly thought about it. Never did a man commit a murder with less remorse than I.

"On my return, I found in the chateau the countess so often mentioned. My measures had been so well taken that she also arrived too late for the funeral. She seemed much agitated on seeing me. Terror, sympathy, grief—I know not what—made her speak so confusedly that I could not understand what she said to console me.

"Did I even listen to her? What need had I of consolation? I was not sorrow-stricken. Finally she took me familiarly by the hand and said in a low voice that she was obliged to confide to me a secret and that she counted on my honor as a nobleman not to abuse it. She had given to my wife to keep for her a package of letters that she could not keep herself, and she begged of me to give them back to her. When she was speaking I felt that I shivered several times from head to foot. With apparent coldness I questioned her on the contents of these letters. At this question the lady started and replied with indignation.

"Sir, your wife was more generous than you. When she took charge of these letters she did not ask me their contents. She even gave me her word never to look at them, and I am convinced that she never even glanced at them. Hers was a noble soul, and she would have disdained to break in secret her given word."

"It is well," I replied. "How shall I recognize the package?"

"It was tied by a pink ribbon with a silver edge."

"I will go and search for it."

"I took my wife's keys and began to search for the packet; although I knew where it was I pretended to have some difficulty in finding it."

"Is it this?" I said, handing it to the countess.

"Yes, yes! See, the knot I made is still there. She never touched it."

"I did not dare to lift my eyes to her. I feared lest she should read in them that I had undone it, and that I had undone something else besides. I took leave of her hastily; she got into her carriage and drove off. Poor woman, she had her excuse. Her husband was brutal and dissipated. If I had been like him I should have deserved a wife like her. Oh! but my wife! her heart was innocent, her soul angelic! She loved her husband even in the moment when her husband killed her. I do not know what I did during the first hours that followed. When I came back to the consciousness of the horrible reality I was in the vault, beside the coffin. I saw the lid slowly raised and the dead woman within rose noiselessly before me. I was stretched, stiff and stark, beside the coffin, one hand on its edge and the other beneath her head. The lips of the corpse were white; one drop of blood hung from them. She bent slowly towards me, opened her eyes as when I murdered her, and kissed my right hand. The drop of blood fell again on my flesh; her eyes shut once more; she fell back on her cold pillow and the coffin closed over her dead body.

"A short time after I was awakened by a pain as that produced by a scorpion's sting. I rushed into the open air. It was early morning. No one saw me. The drop of blood had disappeared; there was no outward sign of the pain, and yet the spot where the blood had fallen burned as though being eaten away by a corroding poison. The pain gave me no respite and increased from hour to hour. I could sleep sometimes, but even then I never lost consciousness of my suffering. There was no one to whom I could make complaint, and for that matter there was no one who would have believed my story. You have been witness to the intensity of my suffering, and you know how much your operation relieved me. But as soon as the wound heals the pain comes back. It has come now for the third time, and I have no longer the strength to struggle against it. In an hour I shall be dead. One thought consoles me—as she has avenged herself on me in this world, she will, perhaps, forgive me in the next. I thank

you for your good offices. May God reward you for them!"

A few days after the newspapers of Sz— recorded that one of our richest landed proprietors had blown out his brains. Some attributed the suicide to grief at his wife's death; others, who were better informed, to an incurable wound. Those who knew best said he was a monomaniac, and his wound, which could not be cured, existed only in his imagination.

The last number of the *Harp* contains a detailed account of the reunion of the Alumni of Ottawa College, with a portrait and biographical sketch of the President, Dr. Tabaret. We had the pleasure of presenting our readers with a view of this institution some weeks ago, in our list of Canadian Houses of Learning, and we are glad to hear that it is so prosperous. It has turned out many of our most talented young men in this city and throughout Ontario. It is also largely patronized from the United States.

OUR CHESS COLUMN.

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

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. W. S., Montreal.—Letters received. Thanks.
Student, Montreal.—Correct solution received of Problem No. 232.
R. F. M., Sherbrooke, P.Q.—Correct solution received of Problem for Young Players No. 233.
E. H., Montreal.—Correct solution received of Problem for Young Players No. 236.

We see that the American Chess editors are asking the question, "Shall there be a Chess Congress this year in the United States?" This Chess Congress, as a matter of course, means a grand tourney of chessplayers, with prizes to be competed for, and also a problem tourney with similar attractions.

The chief difficulty exists in determining whether it shall be restricted to players of the United States, or whether it shall be open to the talent of all nations.

Another point equally difficult of solution is the choice of a city which would be the most eligible place for the assembling of players who would be anxious to take part in a gathering of this nature.

There is sufficient interest taken in chess by our cousins situated south of us to lead to the success of the undertaking, even though they should confine it to native skill, but it is very probable that many among them would much prefer that it should be open to all comers, as was the case at the Paris Exhibition. Here, again, however, another difficulty presents itself, and one which at the present time will weigh very heavily, and that is the raising of sufficient funds to make the prizes attractive enough to overcome the impediments of distance and loss of time.

The Americans, however, with their tact and enterprise, would not be overcome by an obstacle of this nature, and, therefore, should they really set to work in the matter, we are sure it will be a success.

We observe that St. Louis is spoken of as a locality which would offer many advantages to the players of the United States. There can be no doubt of this, should it be decided to make the Congress a national one, and, even in case it should be opened to all players, the facilities for travelling on the continent would considerably lessen the disadvantages of those who might be tempted to send their names as competitors from the other side of the ocean.

The increased interest taken in Chess in the United States is wonderful; an increase which took its rise, no doubt, from the success obtained a few years ago, both at home and abroad, by Paul Morphy.

The next thing, then, is to keep it up, and to do this effectively there must be Chess magazines, Chess Columns, and Tourneys, and as many Chess gatherings as possible. By all means, then, we would say to the players across the line, "Have a Congress."

THE COMING MATCH.

The negotiations between Messrs. Hooper and Mackenzie for their proposed match have been brought to a satisfactory conclusion; nothing remains to be agreed on but the time when play shall begin, which Captain Mackenzie leaves to be named by Mr. Hooper. From the tenor of the correspondence between these gentlemen we gather that it is the desire of Mr. Hooper to have the match begun at once. He has been requested to name the exact time, and Captain Mackenzie, as we go to press, awaits his reply. The match is to be played in Chicago, and is to be decided by the winning of five games by either party, draws not counting; the time limit is fifteen moves an hour, and three games per week are to be played. James Morgan, Esq., of Chicago, the well-known chessplayer, has been agreed on as stakeholder. The amount of the stake is at present fixed at \$500, but there is a probability that it will be increased. Mr. Hooper allows Captain Mackenzie \$100 for his expenses.—*Turf, Field and Farm*.

John J. White, of Cleveland, O., has the largest chess library in America, and next comes the library of the deceased Professor Allen, and next to this may be mentioned that of Charles A. Gilberg, of Brooklyn. The latter numbers nearly 1,000 volumes.—*Hartford Times*.

The combatants in the Mason and Potter match are again level, Mr. Mason having won the thirteenth game, which was commenced on Saturday last, continued on Monday, and finished on Wednesday. Mr. Mason had a noticeable advantage at least twice in the game, but was not able to effect his objects; and we think that but for an ill-advised course adopted by Mr. Potter on his forty-sixth move there would have been a draw. The present state of the score is: Mason, 3; Potter, 3; drawn, 7. So far it has been a neck-and-neck contest; indeed, a harder-fought match has not taken place for a long time. The combatants have both played hitherto with extreme care, and cannot be said to have given each other many chances. For this very reason nearly all the games have been remarkably difficult, and the parties have had to fight in the most dogged fashion for advantages that between players of a finer style would scarcely come into the reckoning.—*Land and Water, Aug. 2*.

Mr. Mason has won another game of his opponent, and is therefore now one ahead. This game was commenced on Saturday last at the Divan, and continued at the City Club on Wednesday. Mr. Potter, at the adjournment, had a most decided advantage, but, on the resumption, he ingeniously contrived to turn what was practically a won game into a lost one in a very few moves. The score now stands: Mason, 4; Potter, 3; drawn, 7.—*Land and Water, Aug. 9*.