

## CHESS AMONGST THE CELTS.

THE ancient game of chess was a great favourite with the Celts in former times. The amusements, as indeed everything else connected with this ancient race, which once inhabited all those countries, have been almost completely hidden from modern notice. Mr. Tom Taylor's beautiful translation of the Breton Lays cannot fail to excite an interest in everything relating to the Celts. We purpose to collect some of the statements that we have met with at various times, and in different quarters, about Celtic chess.

There was a prince of Hy Many, a territory situated in the modern county of Galway, who was surnamed "the chess player," no doubt from his being skilled in the game. In the same principality the officer who kept the chess-boards was the same that had charge of the gold and silver—in fact the treasurer.

In an old will of one of the kings of Ireland, Cathair, he is reported as leaving to one of his sons, "a man intelligent in chess-playing," who seems, by the way, to have been good for nothing else, only his chess-board and chess-furniture; which, it may be presumed, was an antique and elegant way of telling him to live by his wits, and thank God that he had them.

There is an old historic tale which gives us the following passage, quoted in the Introduction to the Book of Rights, one of the Celtic Society's publications, in which *fithcheal*, or chess, is thus mentioned:—

"What is thy name?" said Eochaidh. 'It is not illustrious,' said the other, 'Midir of Brigh Leith.' 'What brought thee hither?' said Eochaidh. 'To play *fithcheal* (chess) with thee,' replied he. 'Art thou good at *fithcheal*?' said Eochaidh. 'Let us have proof of it,' said Midir. 'The Queen,' said Eochaidh, 'is asleep, and the house in which the *fithcheal* is, belongs to her.' 'There is here,' said Midir, 'a no-worse *fithcheal*!' This was true indeed: it was a board of silver and pure gold, and every angle was illuminated with precious stones, and there was a man-bag of woven brass wire. Midir then arranges the *fithcheal*. 'Play,' said Midir. 'I will not, except for a wager,' said Eochaidh. 'What wager shall we stake?' said Midir. 'I care not what,' said Eochaidh. 'I shall have for thee,' said Midir, 'fifty dark grey steeds, if thou winnest the game.'"

In the Book of Rights itself the game is several times mentioned. Chess-boards were a common present from the kings of their chiefs, and if they were like Midir's, of gold and silver, they formed a valuable part of the stipend paid by the king to his chiefs. Many such entries as the following occur in the Book of Rights:—

Entitled is the king of Ui Briuin of fame  
To five steeds and five mantels,  
Ten swords, ten crooked drinking horns  
Ten bondmen, ten chessboards.

The same king, the king of Connaught, who gave the above present, gave also to another lord two, and to another ten, chess-boards.

Amongst the directions for a banquet at Tara, the following must be noted:—

Wine is to be dealt out to them at Tara  
Until their spirits are increased; (*sic*)  
Variegated drinking horns with their peaks,  
Sets (of chessmen) with their chessboards.

A chessman made of horn, elegantly carved into the form of a king sitting in a chair of state, was found some time ago in a bog in the county of Meath. This is, we believe, the only known relic of the ancient game of chess in Ireland. C. S.

FILLING-UP.—England began the present century with four acres of land for every person within her borders. When the century was half through, there were but two acres per inhabitant; and now we are upon a descending scale of fractions between two acres and one acre to each person. The estimate of the population of England in the middle of the year 1865 gives 1.78 acre to each person. In Scotland the tide of life rises more slowly, and there are still six acres to every head of population.

## PASTIMES.

## ARITHMETICAL PUZZLES.

1. A certain number, consisting of two digits, is multiplied by four, and thus becomes greater by 3 than the number formed by transposing the digits. What is the number?

2. A boy having a bag of marbles, found that when he counted them by either 2, 4 or 5 at a time there remained 1. Required the least number he could have in the bag.

3. A boy having asked the age of his father, received from him the following reply—12 years ago I was 4 times your age, but if we live 6 years longer, I shall only be twice your age. What were their respective ages at the time the question was put?

## RIDDLES.

1. Why is a stereoscope like matrimony?
2. How do young ladies like gentlemen to come to their doors?
3. Why is it supposed that there is more water in the Pacific than in the Atlantic?

## PUZZLE.

A gentleman, dining out a few days since, on entering the dining-room saw a likeness, and on asking the host whose picture it was, received this reply:—

"Brothers and sisters have I none  
But that man's father, was my father's son."

Whose likeness was it?

## CHARADES.

1. I am a word of 7 letters—my 1, 7, 5, 6, 3, is a Court-house official; my 2, 7, 1, 4, 5, 1, is the name of an ocean; my 5, 1, 6, is distantly related to the last, and very agreeable in summer; my 4, 2, 7, is used in shipbuilding; my 1, 2, 7, 4, is a vehicle; my 7, 2, 4, is an animal; my 1, 3, 2, 4, 6, has frequent connection with earthenware; and my whole is the name of a prominent Lower Canadian.

I am a word of 9 letters—my 8, 2, 4, is what one half of us are, or, have been; my 8, 7, 6, 4 is generally a valuable possession; my 9, 5, 6, is a Spanish nobleman; my 3, 7, 8, 1, is expressive of repose; my 6, 5, 9, is a form of recognition; my 3, 2, 6, 7, 8, is a useful artificial work; my 1, 5, 7, 6, is expressive of pain, and my whole is an intimate friend of the preceding.

## ANAGRAMS.

The following are four lines of poetry;—it will only require a little perseverance on the part of our readers to transpose the letters so as to form the proper words:

Urht si a lahvynee nippeirc!—a thlig  
Ehows amseb lwil erve diegw het nilgiwl hirgt.  
A xfdie asrt— a oletpss necalt uns  
In het dimsn veenab—genbuaelhnac nad eno.

## ANSWERS TO PUZZLES, &amp;c., No. 6.

## PUZZLES.

1. 16 lads, 15 received  $3\frac{1}{4}d.$  each, and one  $7\frac{1}{4}d.$
2. 94 turkeys, 1 sheep, 3 cows.
3.  $5\frac{1}{2} + 5 = 6\frac{1}{2}$ .

## CONUNDRUMS.

1. A dripping pan. 2. Because he is influenced by the spirits. 3. Wat Tyler, Will Rufus, (What tiler will roof us).

## TRANSPOSITIONS.

1. Possess. 2. Saturday Reader. 3. Oshawa.
4. Waterfall.

## CHARADE.

Host-age (hostage).

## RIDDLE.

Wood.

The following answers have been received.

Puzzles.—All, E. H. A., S. E. J., St. Johns; H. H. V., Student; Nos. 1 and 2, H. J. M., C. R. K.; No. 1, J. McD. P. Alto.

Conundrums.—All, H. H. V.; J. K.; Ellen G.; No. 1, E. H. A.; George, B. C. J.; (several have answered "wet.") No 2, C. R. K., Student; Alice M. No. 3, D. S. H. L.; William P.

Transpositions.—All, E. H. A.; J. McD. P.; C. R. R.; W. M.; George F.; No. 1, H. J. M.; Fanny D.; Ellen G.; Nos. 3 and 4, Fanny D.; H. J. M., Lola; No. 3, S. E. J.

Charades.—H. H. V.; George T. Lola; Ellen G.

Riddles.—Fanny D.; Lola; H. H. V.; Alto.

## SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.

HOW SUGAR IS MADE WHITE.—The way in which sugar is made white, it is said, was found out in a curious way. A hen that had gone through a clay mud-puddle, went with her muddy feet into a sugar-house. She left her tracks on a pile of sugar. It was observed by some one that wherever the tracks were the sugar whitened. This led to some experiments. The result was that wet clay came to be used in refining sugar. It is used in this way:—The sugar is put into earthen jars, shaped as you see the sugar loaves are. The large ends are upwards. The smaller ends have a hole in them. The jar is filled with sugar, the clay put over the top and kept wet. The moisture goes down through the sugar and drops from the hole in the small end of the jar. This makes the sugar perfectly white.

PALIMPSESTS.—The scarcity of writing materials led, in the Middle Ages, to an attempt of economizing them, which was attended with very mischievous results to literature. Manuscripts containing the most valuable productions of antiquity were effaced, that the parchment on which they were written might be used for some worthless legend, or some fanciful disquisition equally valueless. Various efforts have been made to revive the more ancient writing, in the hope of recovering some lost work of classic antiquity. A very effective means of attaining this object has lately been discovered by accident. An old engraving having been photographed, a line which had been written with a pen was perceived in the copy, though nothing of the kind had been observed in the engraving. An examination, however, showed that it had been there, but was erased, under the supposition, very probably, that it lessened the value of the engraving. This discovery of another curious result of photography immediately suggested its use as a means of reviving the effaced writing of palimpsests, and it is even hoped that what is thus recovered may be transferred directly to steel or stone.

COCA LEAVES.—These, which are the leaves of different varieties of the *Erythroxylon Coca*, a South American shrub, have a very remarkable effect on the system, rendering the person who chews them capable, with the use of little or no food, of enduring great fatigue for a very considerable time. Von Tschudi employed an Indian for five days at some very fatiguing work: during the whole of that time he took no food, and rested only two hours in the night, but chewed an ounce of coca leaves every two or three hours. At the end of the five days he was able, without any inconvenience, to perform a considerable journey, taking no sustenance but what he derived from chewing coca. Dr. Scherzer mentions an Indian who travelled a distance of 243 miles and back, resting only one day between the journeys, and having to cross a mountain 13,000 feet high, using, during the whole time, only a little maize, but chewing abundance of coca. These leaves are consumed in large quantities in South America, but have not yet come into use in Europe. They afford another curious instance of the instinctive choice of substances containing theine, or some analogous nitrogenous compound; for it has been found that the coca contains a base which has been termed cocaine, and which resembles theine, caffeine, &c.—*Scientific Review*.

A manufacturer of photographic chemicals at Paris has invented a new kind of writing-ink, which is described as a mixture of the colouring-matter of dye-woods with some of the products of his factory, possessing the advantage over other kinds of ink in not being liable to deposit a sediment, or to become thick or mouldy, while it flows freely, and dries rapidly.