

OUR ENGLISH LETTER.

(From an Occasional Correspondent.)

LONDON, Feb. 25, 1871.

M. Thiers, whom I pointed out in my last letter as likely to be chosen as leader of the French Assembly, was duly appointed Chief of the Executive power of the French Republic, on the 17th inst. In accepting the appointment Thiers, in his speech, stated "that he did so with obedience, devotion and love. Sentiments of which France stood all the more in need, inasmuch as she was unfortunate. "But," he added, "She is still great, young, rich, and full of resources, and will always remain a lasting monument of human energy." In a subsequent speech he said: "We must all act like grave and thinking men, not like children." He is now the most powerful and most popular man in France. The Ministry was selected by him from those members he considered were held in most esteem by the people: Jules Favre, Minister of Foreign Affairs; General Le Flo, Minister of War, etc.—M. Thiers himself undertaking no special portfolio, so as to have time to devote all his energies to the general affairs of the country.

The armistice, which was to have ended last night, has been extended till midnight to-morrow (Sunday.) The morning papers say that the treaty has not been signed. Bismarck has offered the choice of the cup or dagger, and one or other must be accepted. Thiers can have no resource but to yield to the demands of Germany, viz., Alsace and Lorraine, Metz if not Belfort, and an overwhelming indemnity.

"France," the Times says, "must yield territory, but it would be wise for Germany not to take more than she has some assurance of being able to keep in security, if not without disturbance. In the present exhaustion of France Germany might insist on much, but France would not always remain exhausted and Germany might not always remain united and powerful as now." The reason of Germany demanding also Metz and Belfort, is the probability of some day France attacking Germany.

Bismarck asks £240,000,000 stg. as indemnity, £20,000,000 stg. to be deducted as being contributions already levied, leaving the enormous sum of £220,000,000 stg. yet to be paid by France.

The actual cost of the war by Germany is represented at £160,000,000 stg. some months since, and the money since expended and cost of preparations the Chancellor puts down as the difference.

Thiers has a most difficult task to perform, and is placed in a most trying position, as it is impossible, I should think, for France to pay any such sum,—no such amount having ever been raised by any one nation, not even by Great Britain in the great war with Bonaparte.

The Pope has recognized the Government of the French Republic, and so have all the European States, with the exception of Greece, which is expected to do so soon.

A large quantity of Orsini bombs have been seized in Paris, and fears are entertained that bloody conflicts will ensue, should the Germans enter Paris.

I visited Windsor Castle with your special artist on Wednesday last, and was enabled, through the kindness of Her Majesty's Inspector of the Castle, to view some of its beauties and the grandeur of the apartments, also St. George's Chapel, and the arrangements being made for the approaching marriage. I only regretted that my time was so limited, or I should have been delighted to have spent some days in examining the magnificent paintings in the Queen's audience chamber, the Vandyck room, (formerly the ball-room) the State drawing-room, &c., and all the magnificent trophies, presents, objects of interest, &c. I saw a marble bust of Princess Beatrice executed by her sister, Princess Louise, a very good likeness.

Your artist and special correspondent at Windsor will, no doubt, give full particulars in a letter, which will be interesting to your readers. Her Majesty being at Buckingham Palace, and through the aforesaid extreme civility of the gentleman in charge of the castle, we were enabled to pass through, see, and have explained to us, the various interesting places and things, a favour which is rarely, if ever, granted to outsiders.

The Mayor of Windsor and the loyal inhabitants of the royal borough have decided upon presenting a handsome wedding present to the Princess, and also a substantial dinner to the poor of the town.

There are several rumours about the Marquis of Lorne. Some say that he is to be immediately raised to the Peerage, and quite a controversy has sprung up as to what title and rank in the Peerage he should hold. He cannot, as is the custom of eldest sons of Peers, be called to the Upper House by a barony of his father, because the Duke has only one barony in the Peerage of the United Kingdom, and by that alone the Duke of Argyll sits in the House of Lords. It is presumed he will be created a Baron of the United Kingdom as Lord Inverary, or be made a Marquis in his own right by his present title.

In the latter case he would have precedence of his father in the House of Lords. This is mere surmise, but I think that the happy man will remain just as he is—Lord Lorne.

I send you a photograph of an original bill of fare of a dinner just before the capitulation—a strange banquet.

Pain de siége.

Potage—Bouillon de cheval.

Cotelettes de chien—aux petits pois.

Civet de chat—à la parisienne.

Ane—à la sauce soubise.

Terrine de souris—à la chinoise.

Filet de mulet—à la portugaise.

Rôle d'Autruche.

Petits pois—à l'allemande.

Pommes de terre—maitre d'hotel.

Salade de maches et celeris.

Plum-pudding.

Her Majesty the Queen held a Court at Buckingham Palace on Tuesday, which was numerously attended.

The Princess Louise's dress was of rich white silk, and train of same, trimmed with ruffles of silk and fringe. Head-dress, a wreath of narcissus, with diamonds and feathers and veil. Orders, Victoria and Albert, St. Isabel and the Coburg and Gotha family order. Of course she looked lovely and interesting.

Lord Lisgar, the Governor-General of Canada, has been appointed to the Lieutenancy of the county of Cavan—an honour in his own country.

The exhibition of the works of the best Masters, which has been open for the last two months by the Royal Academy of Arts at Burlington House, I visited on Thursday, but did not enjoy seeing the works as much as I might have done owing to the great crowd of people there, and the clouds of dust thrown up by the ladies' dresses and feet of the visitors,—the managers having placed coarse matting over the floors, which had not been taken up since the opening of the rooms. This, I trust, will be remedied another year.

Her Majesty contributes some good portraits by Vandyck, Holbein, and others.

The largest contributors are the Marquis of Westminster, Lord Ashburton, Wynn Ellis, Esq., and Lord Overstone.

Owing to the aforesaid nuisance, for the rooms were unsufferably hot, I unfortunately could only cast a cursory glance at "ye aforesaid ancient works of art," and therefore cannot give you a good description of the wonderful works of art there exhibited, and you must blame the managers therefore.

Stop I did gaze and had an excellent view of Murillo's "Virgin covering the body of Saint Clara, with a mantle brought from Heaven." Also, a portrait of "Lady Anne Fitzpatrick," known as Sylvia, by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Titian's "Woman taken in adultery."

Mr. Ashbury, the owner of the "Cambria," is now building at Cowes, Isle of Wight, a new schooner yacht to be called the "Livonia." He purposes challenging the American yachts during the ensuing autumn. Some description of her may be, therefore, interesting. Her tonnage will be 280 tons; length, 115 feet; beam, 23 feet 7 inches; and draught 12 feet 6 inches. The rig will be a fore and aft schooner, and to give some idea of the immense power of the yacht, the length of the mainmast from hounds to deck is 68 feet, and that of foremast 64 feet, being 13 feet longer than those usually placed in men-of-war of 2,000 tons.

She will carry as much canvass almost as a vessel of 1,500 tons. The framing or timbers are of the best picked oak, the planking, American elm, to the light water line, then oak and teak.

Speed and strength have been the great object of the builder in the formation of the hull, but the comforts of the owner and his friends have been carefully studied, in the internal arrangements. The accommodation consists of a large main saloon, four state-rooms, ladies' rooms, bath-rooms, wardrobes, &c., all fitted with polished red pine fittings, and will be tastefully decorated. Mr. Rutsey is the builder, and I had a good view of her, when strolling through Cowes on my way to Carisbrooke Castle. If she does not beat anything in the world, or that the Americans can produce, I shall be much disappointed.

Mr. Darwin's new book on the "Descent of Man" has just been published.

His theory is thus given:—"Man is descended from a hairy quadruped, furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in its habits, and an inhabitant of the old world." Mr. D half apologizes for having given to his fellow creatures a pedigree of prodigious length, but not of noble quality.

Lady readers of his work will learn with satisfaction that they are not necessarily, therefore, related to any existing ape or monkey. On the contrary, it is more probable that the ancestors of the Simian stock (for man is supposed to have diverged from the Catarhine or Old World division of the Simiada, which bestows upon us all a pedigree extending beyond the time of William the Conqueror) were unlike any man or monkey who can now be found in Shoreditch or the Zoological Gardens. Our progenitors, Darwin tells us, probably lived in Africa and were distinguished by that ornament, the loss of which received Lord Monbodda's serious attention.

Mr. Frank Buckland, I see, announces in Land and Water the death of the young Hippopotamus, born in the Zoological Gardens. He described at its birth this baby Hip. "It was 4 feet long and about the size and weight and not unlike a three-score bacon pig, colour reddish mahogany, head like a calf, forehead and forepart of the head with the appearance as if varnished with a thick black varnish. Imagine, he says, a calf's head of india rubber and you have a good idea of the face of the sucking Behemoth. It lifts up its head and looks stupidly around wagging its rudder-like tail without rising from the straw."

Sir Stafford Northcote, who sailed in the "Russia" for New York on Saturday last, is said to have been appointed on the American Commission in place of Sir John Rose.

The Court Journal says:—"Sir John Rose is unable, in consequence of private engagements, to serve on the Alabama Commission. This is a matter to be regretted, but the Government has found an admirable substitute in Sir Stafford Northcote."

I leave to-day for Liverpool.

W. M. F.

The Life Association of Scotland, one of the most prudently managed and best established of British Life Assurance Companies, offers special attraction to assurers during the present month. As will be seen by advertisement elsewhere, parties assuring now will share in the profits to be divided next month, either as additions to the policy or in reduction of premium, according to their option. It will be seen that the Company does a very large business, being high up in the list among the seventy Life Assurance Companies now doing business in Great Britain.

PTARMIGAN HUNTING IN LABRADOR.

The ptarmigan or white partridge is found plentifully along the north-east shore and the Labrador coast, and hunting it is one of the "sports" which these regions afford. Our illustration is from a sketch of a scene at the old Post, Seven Islands, the artist having exhibited the two usual modes followed by sportsmen. The first with the enormously long esquimaux whip requires very great skill and considerable strength, as the sportsman must strike the bird fairly on the neck. Only the native races practise this mode, and they cannot do so with much success except after a heavy fall of snow, when the birds become very tame. It need scarcely be said that the use of the fowling-piece is much more reliable than the "whip." The ptarmigan on the Labrador coast changes colour in summer, and becomes a greyish brown not unlike the swamp partridge.

CHESS.

The match by telegraph (Montreal v. Quebec) commenced on Wednesday evening, the 1st inst., and excited considerable interest among Chess-players of all grades on both sides.

Four players, selected on each side for the occasion, were paired by lot, and the contest was maintained with remarkable stubbornness and spirit; the champions of the sister cities putting forth all their skill in friendly rivalry.

Several fine games, containing interesting positions, and exhibiting some brilliant strokes of play, resulted, as might have been expected; the game we give below was the first one concluded in the match, after upwards of seven hours' hard fighting.

SCOTTISH GAMBIT.

- White. Black. Mr. C. P. Champion (Quebec Club). Mr. J. G. Ascher (Montreal Club). 1. P. to K. 4th. P. to K. 4th. 2. K. Kt. to B. 3rd. Q. Kt. to B. 3rd. 3. P. to Q. 4th. P. takes P. 4. B. to Q. B. 4th. B. to K. 2nd. 5. Castles. P. to Q. 3rd. 6. Kt. takes P. Kt. takes Kt. 7. Q. takes Kt. B. to K. B. 3rd. 8. Q. to Q. 3rd. Q. B. to B. 3rd. 9. B. takes B. P. takes B. 10. P. to K. B. 4th. Q. to Q. 2nd. 11. Q. Kt. to B. 3rd. Castles. (Q. R.) 12. B. to K. 3rd. P. to Q. B. 3rd. 13. P. to Q. Kt. 4th. Q. to Q. B. 3rd. (a) 14. B. to Q. 2nd. B. takes Kt. 15. B. takes B. Kt. to B. 3rd. 16. B. takes Kt. P. takes B. 17. P. to Q. B. 3rd. K. R. to K. Kt. sq. 18. P. to K. Kt. 3rd. P. to K. R. 4th. 19. P. to K. R. 3rd. P. to K. R. 5th. 20. P. to K. Kt. 4th. P. to Q. 4th. 21. P. to K. 5th. P. to K. B. 4th. 22. P. to K. Kt. 5th. P. to Q. 5th. (b) 23. P. takes Q. P. Q. to Q. Kt. 3rd. 24. Q. to K. 3rd. R. takes Q. P. 25. Q. R. to Q. Kt. sq. Q. R. takes K. B. P. (c) 26. Q. takes Q. R. takes R. ch. 27. K. to R. 2nd. P. takes Q. 28. R. takes R. R. takes Kt. P. 29. R. to K. B. 4th. R. to R. 4th. 30. R. to Q. 4th. K. to Q. B. 2nd. 31. P. to Q. R. 3rd. R. to R. 3rd. 32. K. to K. Kt. 2nd. K. to Q. B. 3rd. (d) 33. P. to Q. R. 4th. K. to Q. B. 2nd. 34. R. to Q. B. 4th. ch. K. to Q. 2nd. 35. P. to Q. Kt. 5th. R. to K. 4th. 36. K. to K. B. 3rd. P. takes P. 37. P. takes P. R. to R. 3rd. 38. R. to Q. 4th. ch. K. to Q. B. 2nd. 39. R. to Q. B. 4th. ch. K. to Q. Kt. sq. 40. R. to Q. 4th. R. to R. sq. 41. R. to Q. B. 4th. R. takes B. sq. 42. B. takes R. ch. K. takes B. 43. K. to K. B. 4th. K. to Q. 2nd. 44. K. to K. Kt. 5th. K. to K. 2nd. 45. K. takes P. K. to his B. 2nd. 46. K. to Kt. 5th. K. to Kt. 2nd. 47. K. to R. 5th. K. to R. 2nd. 48. K. to Kt. 5th. Drawn game, after a few more moves.

(a) Black has skillfully evaded all the difficulties of the opening, and now assumes an attacking position which soon develops into a formidable attack.

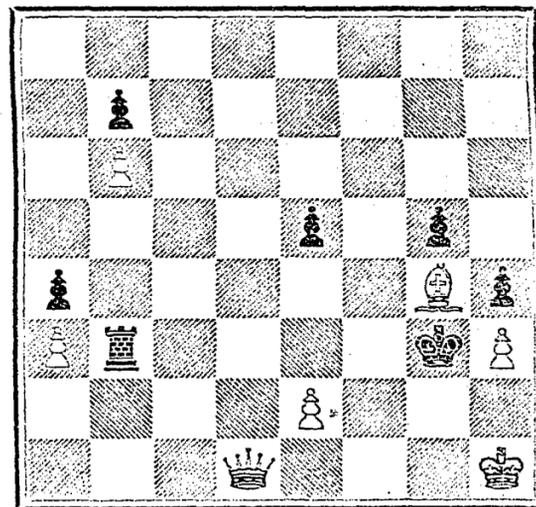
(b) Very well played.

(c) At first sight this looks like the "coup juste."

(d) The position is peculiar: notwithstanding his superiority in pawns, Black cannot do more than draw: the play on both sides is first class, and the ending, particularly, is well worthy of examination.

PROBLEM No. 27.

BLACK.



WHITE.

White to play, and mate in four moves.

Temperature in the shade, and Barometer indications for the week ending Saturday, March 11, 1871, observed by John Underhill, Optician to the Medical Faculty of McGill University, 299 Notre Dame Street.

			9 A. M.	1 P. M.	6 P. M.
Sunday,	March	5	24°	36°	30°
Monday,	"	6	33°	36°	32°
Tuesday,	"	7	25°	26°	27°
Wednesday,	"	8	35°	44°	37°
Thursday,	"	9	45°	52°	51°
Friday,	"	10	43°	40°	42°
Saturday,	"	11	45°	57°	53°

			MAX.	MIN.	MEAN.
Sunday,	March	5	38°	14°	26°
Monday,	"	6	38°	26°	32°
Tuesday,	"	7	30°	15°	22° 5
Wednesday,	"	8	46°	15°	30° 5
Thursday,	"	9	56°	32°	44°
Friday,	"	10	45°	38°	41° 5
Saturday,	"	11	58°	33°	45° 5

Aneroid Barometer compensated and corrected.

			9 A. M.	1 P. M.	6 P. M.
Sunday,	March	5	30.25	30.23	30.15
Monday,	"	6	30.00	29.98	30.10
Tuesday,	"	7	30.46	30.52	30.38
Wednesday,	"	8	30.32	30.28	30.22
Thursday,	"	9	30.14	30.08	30.04
Friday,	"	10	30.06	30.12	30.22
Saturday,	"	11	30.30	30.24	30.12