

"CATS ON BOARD."
(A True Story.)

"And why should na I have a cat of my ain, I should like to know? The wee bet thing is just a waif an' I mean to keep it!"

"Deed you'll not then! keep cats to fall overboard and bring bad luck upon us," said the boyish looking steward who with hands deep in trousers pockets and cap tilted over his eyes leaned cross legged against the corner of the saloon of one of our lake steamers.

"It need na fall overboard unless it were helped, an' I'll mind against that!"

"Ha, ha, keep track of a cat among the freight, I guess you'd have your hands full and a fine time of it too. But I am not going to have cats on board so over the thing goes," and the man made a feint to take the cat.

"Don't be in a hurry, John," I mean keep the beastie, and the cunning scots woman hugged the treasure closer while it purred its contentment against her neck.

"It's a beauty any way and it would go hard to drown the wee bet thing."

"One of the men will do it for ye," groaned John.

"An' bring ill luck upon the trip, eh?" and the woman felt she had gained a point in the argument.

"No my honey!" laughed John. "I guess we'll leave it at the next wharf and not risk the luck. I hate cats anyway."

"I don't doubt ye do, but ye might just as well let me keep this bet pussie, it'll no come in your way!"

"Won't it you bet? It will be under my heels all day and squawkin' round my room all night. You just leave it at the sound; it'll find a friend there may be to—drown it," and the man smiled.

"You're jokin' John, I'll keep the cat," and turning away well satisfied with the issue of the discussion, when the door of the state room near opened and the Captain, a dark thin lipped man with his coat burtoned to his chin and soft hat pressed over his brows came out, scarcely looking at them, sententiously remarking.

"No cats allowed on board, Stewardess," passed down the boat.

Scarcely was he out of hearing before the Steward laughed outright at the expression of dismay upon the woman's face, neither had remembered the vicinity of the Captain's room—and were equally annoyed at having the matter so summarily disposed of, for to disobey the command was not to be thought of, so pussie was left at the Sound.

A week or two afterwards amongst a large influx of English emigrants bound for the great North West came a maiden lady who loth to part with her beloved tabbies, had with much trouble and loss brought them to share her home in the new country, and as the fates arranged, part of her journey lay by the steamer upon which cats were forbidden freight; but by judicious tipping the old lady with the connivance of the porter had her five cats smuggled down below.

Wary with their long journey over land the steamer had not been two days out before pussies had escaped from their box in search of mice amongst the freight—and one more venturesome than the others showed on deck under the feet of a wheel man who was off duty smoking his pipe on the gangway.

"Hello!" he cried as he spied her. "Here be cats aboard, over ye go, and bad luck go wid' ye!" Suiting the action to the word poor pussy was in a moment battling vainly with the waves.

"Bill you sinner; what did you do that for?" called out one of the hands near. "Ye've brought ill luck on this trip now for sure!"

"Ye might ha' let the beast be," cried another.

"She weren't harmin' ye!"

"I guess ye'll suffer for it!"

"Man but ye're a fool to go throw a cat overboard; where were ye born to know no better nor that!" said another.

With a grunt and muttered oath the delinquent knocked the ashes off his pipe and went forward to his post, the men laughing at his discomfort.

The night closed in dark and still, over the broad surface of the lake a great calm lay, no land on either side, each succeeding wave rising in heavy and more sullen swell, that boded a coming storm. Orders were given to close down the hatchways and make all tight for the night. The sky grew darker and darker and ere midnight the storm broke, great flashes of forked lightning roft the inky clouds, deep roars of thunder rolled from end to end of the murky sky, drowning the sound of the rushing rain that fell in torrents on the tossing waves and shaking the boat from stem to stern. Of the sleepless passengers none were more disturbed by the storm than the four remaining tabbies, who also had found their way up from below and in the lulls of the storm told out their woe in long doleful wails that fell upon the luckless wheelman's ear like a cry from another world. Trembling and terrified but unable to leave his post, he tried to close his ears to the awful sounds, the weird yells and haunting cries, great drops stood out upon his forehead as ceasing on our side they were taken up and echoed back in wilder cadence on the other until the very air seemed laden with the wails of the murdered cat. At last the longest watch the man had ever known was ended, and stumbling down into the pantry to his supper before turn-

ing in he vowed that if he lived a hundred years he would never forget it—and as he wiped his forehead swore, "It were the last cat he'd drown you bet!"

OTTAWA.

VARIETIES.

In one of the Portuguese lyrical ballads, which, so far as we know, has never crept into print, a man begins a song half in banter, half in earnest:

It is better to love a dog than to love a woman.
For for a piece of gold a woman will leave you a grief,
But the affection of a dog is endless.

A woman, who perhaps has had some experience of the improvidence as well as of the voracity of mankind, replies, in ready caricature of the other:

It is better to feed a dog than to feed a man.
For with a piece of meat a dog will leave you in peace,
But the hunger of a man will last forever.

And the keen sharp-shooting is kept up through a long range of topics, the ball tossed back and forward from one skillful composer to another, and when improvisation fails traditional badinage is remembered and sung with equal gusto.

POND-BASS make very intelligent pets. I once had three hundred of these little fellows, perfectly tame. Down in one corner of the corn-field I found two patent washing-machines, the beds of which were shaped like scow-boats. These old machines were fast going to ruin, and I readily gained permission to use them for whatever purpose I wished; so, with a hatchet, I knocked off the legs and top-gear; then removed a side from each box, and fastened the two together, making a tank about four feet square. The seam, or crack, where the two parts joined, was filled with oakum, and the whole outside was thickly daubed with coal-tar. The tank was then set in a hole dug for that purpose, and the dirt was filled in and packed around the sides. Back of it I piled rocks, and planted ferns in all the cracks and crannies. I also put rocks in the center of the tank, first covering the bottom with sand and gravel. After filling this with water and plants, I put in three hundred little bass, and they soon became so tame that they would follow my finger all around, or would jump out of the water for a bit of meat held between the fingers. Almost any wild creatures will yield to persistent kind treatment, and become tame. Generally, too, they learn to have a sort of trustful affection for their keepers, who, however, to earn the confidence of such friends, should be almost as wise, punctual, and unflinching as good Dame Nature herself.

One of the same bass, which I gave to a friend of mine, lived in an ordinary glass globe for three years. He was a very intelligent fish, but fearfully spiteful and jealous. My friend's mother thought it was lonesome, and so, one day, she brought home a beautiful gold-fish—a little larger than the bass—to keep it company. She put the gold-fish in the globe, and watched the little bass, expecting to see it wonderfully pleased; but the little wretch worked himself into a terrible passion—erecited every spine upon his back, glared a moment at the intruder, and then made a dart forward, seized the gold-fish by the abdomen, and shook it as a terrier dog shakes a rat, until the transparent water was glittering all over with a shower of golden scales. As soon as possible, the carp was rescued; but it was too late. He only gasped and died. The vicious little bass swam around and around his globe, biting in his rage at all the floating scales. Ever after he was allowed to live a hermit's life, and he behaved himself well. At last the family went away for a couple of weeks, and when they returned the poor little bass lay dead at the bottom of his globe.

One more incident, and I must close: A certain young enthusiast in aquarium matters, waking suddenly one night, beheld an awful apparition. At one side of the room, in a wavering circle of light, a gaping monster was about to make a mouthful of a wriggling creature as large as a cat. The cause of this strange vision soon appeared. The curtain of the window had not been drawn down all the way, and a street-lamp, shining in, made a sort of combined magic-lantern lens and slide of a glass globe, in which some aquarium pets were quarreling. But the "wiggler" escaped somehow, and no harm was done.

OUR CHESS COLUMN.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. W. S. Montreal.—Papers to hand. Thanks. Sudent, Montreal.—Correct solution received of Problem No. 334.

J. B. Lachue, P. Q.—Correct solution received of Problems Nos. 333 and 334. No 333 is a very beautiful Problem. What of 336?

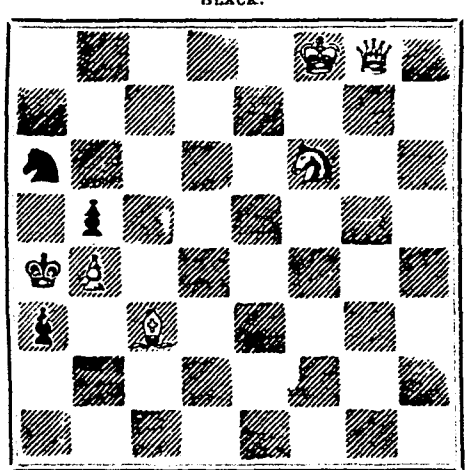
We learn from the Chess Monthly that the mechanical chessplayer, Mephisto, is again to be one of the attractions of London to the amateurs across the Atlantic. His abode will be 48 Regent street, where he will be ready to receive the challenge of all comers. The last time he appeared in public, a small charge was made for permission to try the skill of the mysterious player, and we suppose the same plan will be carried out on his reappearance. Without attempting to explain the nature of "Mephisto," and the means by which he is able to carry on his mimic warfare, there is no doubt of extraordinary chess power being somewhere at command, and all who are bold enough to contest a game with him, have to do their best whatever their own capability may be.

Is "Mephisto" to be considered a professional player? It is evident that he plays for money, and that as soon as he becomes unattractive, and no longer draws the necessary number of daily visitors, he will disappear from the chess world.

A game with him must at all times be beneficial to the player who is desirous of trying his strength against a strong opponent with a view to improvement, and therefore the trifling charge made will be paid with the greatest readiness.

The Field says with reference to the contest between Blackburne and Zukertort that "though the conditions of the match are not yet signed, we understand that the stakes will be deposited in the course of next week, and the commencement of the contest will be fixed for the earliest subsequent date. As a sign of the wide interest taken in the match amongst lovers of the game abroad who have no opportunity of watching the match personally, and can only become acquainted with the games through the medium of their publication in this country, we may mention that some prominent members of the Paris Cercle des Echecs have offered to back either player, merely for the purpose of facilitating the conclusion of preliminaries. We learn that neither party has accepted their chivalrous and complimentary offer, for Mr Zukertort's stakes were already covered at the time the proposition was made, while Mr Blackburne's subscription list was far advanced."

PROBLEM No. 336.
By C. W., of Sunbury.



WHITE.

White to play and mate in three moves.

GAME 463th.

(From the Adelaide Observer.)

CHESS BY CORRESPONDENCE.

The following exciting struggle was conducted by letter a few years ago between the champion lady chess-player of Great Britain, Miss Mary Rudge, of Bristol, and Mr. C. W. Benbow, formerly of Birmingham, but now a resident of Wellington, N.Z.

Two Knights' Defense.

White.—(Miss Rudge.) Black.—(Mr. Benbow.)
1. P to K 4 1. P to K 4
2. Kt to K B 3 2. Kt to Q B 3
3. B to B 4 3. Kt to B 3
4. Kt to Kt 5 4. P to Q 4
5. P takes P 5. Kt to Q R 4
6. P to Q 3

B to Kt 5 (ch) is the popular move, but that in the text was sanctioned by Morphy.

7. Kt to K B 3 6. P to K R 3
8. K Kt to Q 2 7. P to K 5
Q to K 2 is the correct move.

9. P to K B 3 8. B to K Kt 5 (strong)
10. Kt takes P 9. P takes K B P
11. B takes Kt 10. Kt takes P
12. Castles 11. Q takes B
13. K to R 12. B to B 4 (ch)
14. Kt to Q B 3 13. Castles K R
15. Q to K 14. Q to K R 4
16. Kt to K 4 15. K R to K
17. Q to R 4 16. B to Q 3
18. Q takes Q 17. Q to R 4
19. Kt takes B 18. B takes Q
20. B to B 4 19. P takes Kt
20. B to B 4 20. B takes Kt

Mr. Benbow wisely leaves himself with a Kt against the B for the end game, which he continues from this point with great skill.

21. R takes B 21. R to K 7
22. R to Q B 22. R to Q B
23. K to Kt 23. Q R takes P
24. R takes R 24. R takes P
25. R to B 2 25. R takes R
26. K takes R 26. P to Q 4
27. K to K 4 27. Kt to E 3
28. P to Q R 3 28. P to K B 4
29. P to K R 4 29. K to B 2
30. P to K R 5 (bad) 30. P to Q 5 (ch)

Well played. Black's fair antagonist has indiscreetly fixed two Pawns on a different colour to the Bishop, and presently pays the penalty.

31. K to B 3 31. K to K 3
32. K to K 2 32. Kt to K 2
33. K to B 3 33. Kt to Q 4
34. B to Kt 8 34. P to R 3
35. K to Kt 3 35. Kt to B 3
36. K to R 4 36. Kt to Q 2
37. B to B 7 37. K to Q 4
38. K to Kt 3 38. Kt to B 4

And White resigns.

SOLUTIONS.

Solution of Problem No. 334
1. Kt at B 5 to Q 6 1. K to B 5 (a)
2. P to K 5 2. Anything
3. Q mates 1. K to Q 5
2. Q to Kt 2 (a) 2. K mates

Solution of Problem for Young Players No. 332

WHITE BLACK.
1. K R to K Kt 7 1. Any
2. Mates acc.

PROBLEM FOR YOUNG PLAYERS, No. 333.

White. Black.
K at Q R 7 K at Q R 4
R at R 7 Kt at K 4
B at K B 2 Pawns at Q R 3
Kt at Q 8 Q B 3 and Q Kt 4
Pawn at Q Kt 3

White to play and mate in three moves.

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