

CHANCE IN GAMES.

Great Players Often Use Their Most Brilliant Hours to a Game Play. We should like to know how good a player a man must be before he can truly say that he never owes a victory or a defeat at chess to good or ill luck. Chess, as played by beginners, is far more often decided by chance than not. As played even by fairly good players, it is not always a game which is entirely controlled by their contending skill. A more than average player must often confess to himself that the result of a move was purely accidental, and that the very step which he regretted, the moment that it became irrevocable, was the step which ultimately opened the way to success. No doubt among such chess players as Messrs. Blackburne, Steinitz and others this element of chance is reduced to the minimum; but even in their game it must still exist to a certain extent.

A player who is said to play a brilliant game must often appear to blind fortune in making some of the moves which earn him the title, for from all accounts there are among even the best chess players two different classes—the brilliant player and the machinelike player; that is to say, the player who sometimes goes astray from his rule and theory and the player who never deviates from them, and what advantage can the former ever hope to gain over the latter except it be with the aid of chance?

Even more strictly scientific than chess is the game of draughts. Between skillful players of draughts it seems impossible for there to be any room for the intervention of fortune. But then draughts, with all due deference to its players, is not a very amusing game, and they who seek amusement will probably reverse the board, and with the cheerful rattle of dice embark upon the chances of backgammon. Even in games of manual skill it is the lurking element of chance which adds to them no unimportant attraction.

The "glorious uncertainty of cricket" is not an empty phrase; were it not for that uncertainty a cricket match would lose much of its interest not only for the spectators, but for the players too. And in cricket, tennis and in other games, as in chess, there is also the distinction between the brilliant and the cautious player, the player who hazards the most and the player who hazards the least; the one who sometimes is willing to depend on chance, and the one who is not. Now there is no doubt which of these two the world most admires and would most willingly emulate.

Curiously enough, the same world that welcomes the element of chance in games of science and skill is always anxious to introduce some element of science into its diversions with pure chance. When it actually plays with fortune as an antagonist, it gets its keenest enjoyment from its efforts to load the dice. We do not suppose that the gambler exists who does not secretly cherish the fond idea that he can cheat fortune. If betting upon horse races were a matter of absolute uncertainty, the bookmaker's occupation would be gone, and the interest that we now display in betting—we mean to say in the improvement of our breed of horses—would speedily diminish. In this case we try to cheat fortune with the science of superior information, and it must be confessed that the amusement allows a large margin for the operation of that science, and that the person who possesses it wins.

The turf is a board upon which the game of pure chance is only played by fools.—London Spectator.

The Silk Spinning Oyster. A mollusk that might take an important place in textile industries if it existed in sufficient numbers is found in warm seas, especially on the coast of Sicily. It is the pinna, a genus of wing-shelled bivalves, of which one species attains a length of two feet. To attach itself to the rocks it spins a cable of strong filaments, called collectively the byssus. These threads are wonderfully strong, silken in texture and have been woven into various delicate fabrics. A pair of gloves from this material may be seen in the British museum, and fine mummy cloths, made from it by the ancients, are still preserved.—New Orleans Picayune.

Games and Idioms. From cards are derived such familiar sayings as "A card up his sleeve" (a clever if not a very commendable action), "a trump card," "to play your cards well," etc. From billiards we borrow "a fine stroke" from cricket, "a good innings," and from football, "he has the ball at his feet." Many others will suggest themselves to the reader, the foregoing being just jotted down as they occur to the mind of the writer, by way of examples.—Gentleman's Magazine.

Information Wanted. He who wears a small hat in these days runs risks of rude comments. For instance, a young man thus equipped as to headgear was hailed yesterday by an acquaintance. "What are you going around with a pile on your head for?" demanded the outspoken critic.—New York Times.

Yucatan's Giant "Stealers." "The largest mosquitoes in the world are to be found in Yucatan," said Richard Beverly. "Until a few years ago there was not a mosquito in all Mexico. They were introduced by vessels from the United States, and have in the land of their adoption attained proportions unknown in other countries. The lowlands of Yucatan swarmlike with monster mosquitoes whose bite is almost as painful as the sting of a bee. The historical Jersey mosquito sinks into insignificance beside these Titans of their kind, which are frequently as large as houseflies."—Washington Post.

about it is impossible to keep stock of any kind, and during the rainy season people wear coarse netting stretched over face and neck to keep these insects from devouring them.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

A Witty Reply of Pope's. As narrated by Edward Walford in his "Greater London," Frederick, prince of Wales, sometimes visited Alexander Pope at his villa. On one occasion when the prince was on a visit, Pope, after expressing the most dutiful professions of attachment, gave his royal highness an opportunity of observing very shrewdly that his (the poet's) love for princes was inconsistent with his dislike for kings, since princes may in time become kings. Said his royal highness: "Mr. Pope, I hear you don't like princes." "Sir, I beg your pardon." "Well, then, you don't like kings." "Sir, I must own that I like the lion best before his claws are grown." No reply could well have been happier.

A Remarkable Bible. Mr. Augustin Daly, the theatrical manager, possesses what is probably the most remarkable Bible in the world. It comprises forty-two folio volumes, and is illustrated by plates on Biblical subjects. He has copies of all the Madonnas of every age and every school of art, and in the collection are included mezzotints, full line engravings, original drawings and unique prints. He has one original drawing of Raphael's and several of Albert Durer's. The collection is a history of Scriptural art.—Harper's Bazar.

Young People Who Go on the Stage. Mr. Dancy puts down the "draggle tailed" habits of speech on the stage to the fact that the stage is to a great extent the refuge of young people who take to it because they imagine the life to be free and easy, and who adopt it with no greater qualification than an attractive appearance and a confident manner. They also regard it as especially favorable to their purposes, in that as they imagine it requires no preliminary training.—London Telegraph.

A Death from Lightning. Casper relates a case in which a young man was struck and killed. His hair was burned off and his nose bled. The surgeon who examined him saw on the skin of his chest a perfect impression of an inverted tree, as if tattooed. His cap was torn to pieces. He died of injury to the brain.

An Eccentric Bishop. Bishop Wilson, of Calcutta, had as housekeeper a venerable lady who remembered the duel between Sir Philip Francis and Warren Hastings, on Aug. 17, 1780. On entering the cathedral on a Sunday morning, fully robed, lawn sleeves and all, and passing the pew where the old lady sat, he would pause and give her the "kiss of peace" before all the congregation, and this although he had met her at breakfast.

His sermons, too, were racy. Preaching against dishonesty, especially in horseflesh, as one of the great English failings in India, he went on, "Nor are we, servants of the altar, free from yielding to this temptation." Pointing to the occupant of the reading desk below him: "There is my dear and venerable brother, the archdeacon, down there; he is an instance of it. He once sold me a horse; it was unsound; I was a stranger and he took me in."—Exchange.

DUMMIES FOR DRESSES. Figures of Zinc That Enable Women to Become Their Own Dressmakers.

Half a dozen ladies were standing outside of a doorway on a down town business block. Two or three of them were rather slenderly built, while the others were inclined to stoutness. Although they remained there together for several hours, none of them said anything. This was probably because they had no heads. In fact they were made of zinc as far down as just below the hips, while beneath there was nothing at all except an iron stick for each one, with a base to stand upon. It was evident that they were dressmakers' dummies.

Unlike most such dummies, however, these represented the figures of real people. A reporter found by inquiry that the manner of making them is rather curious. For example, Mrs. Jones, for reasons presently to be explained, wants to have one constructed after the model of her own shape. She goes and has herself measured as if for a dress and a costume is cut out according to the measurements. But the material, instead of being silk or other cloth, is sheet zinc. When the pieces have been cut out they are soldered together, instead of being sewn, and thus is obtained a reproduction of the figure of Mrs. Jones.

Necessarily the measuring, cutting and shaping have to be done very carefully, inasmuch as the dummy must have precisely the form of Mrs. Jones. She has it sent home and it serves in future for dressmaking purposes as a substitute for herself—that is to say, she has all her dresses fitted upon it instead of having to bother with that part of the business herself. Any woman will testify what an aggravating bore it is to have a dress fitted, requiring as it does hours of standing before the mirror and all sorts of alterations and readjustments, all of which is a trial to both patience and temper.

But with a dummy to fit the dress upon most of this trouble is avoided. If a dressmaker is employed she can do all the fitting on the model, and if the gown fits the latter it will equally satisfy the requirements of Mrs. Jones. Of course this assumes that Mrs. Jones does not get particularly fatter or thinner, in which case she would be obliged to have herself measured for another dummy. However, the greatest advantage of this device is that Mrs. Jones is able to send her dummy to the dressmaker's house and she need not go there or disturb herself again about the matter, having provided the materials, until the gown is sent home all ready to be put on.

Most women are obliged to make their own dresses, and for their mis-

poses such a dummy is invaluable, inasmuch as they are thus enabled to fit their own waists and drape their own skirts as well and as easily as if they were making a costume for somebody else. The zinc dummies cost from eight to twenty dollars. The price of them goes up rapidly with the avoirdupois of the purchaser, so that a dummy with a 48-inch bust costs at least twice as much as one with a 36-inch bust measure. It is probable, therefore, that before long similar dummies will be made for men, who can thus have clothes made for them by their tailors without being obliged to be measured.—Washington Star.

Thackeray's Head. Thackeray, like most Anglo-Indian infants, was sent, when he was about five years of age, to the mother country for mental and physical nourishment. An aunt with whom he lived discovered the child one morning parading about in his uncle's hat, which exactly fitted him. Fearing some abnormal and dangerous development of the brain, she carried him at once to a famous physician of the day, who is reported to have said, "Don't be afraid, madam; he has a large head, but there's a good deal in it!" His brain, when he died—fifty-three years later—weighed 58 ounces.—Harper's.

A Pretty Hard Corset. In 1888 the corps pique, a corset, was a hard wooden mold, "into which the wearer was compressed and suffered from the splinters of wood that penetrated the flesh. It took the skin off the waist and made the ribs ride up, one over the other."—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

It has been mentioned as a proof of Alexander Pope's love of economy that he wrote most of his verses on scraps of paper, and particularly on the backs of letters.

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