

## A GAME OF CHECKERS.

"Play checkers, Schoolmaster?"

"Oh, yes; I play checkers."

The time betrayed the rash confidence of youth, but the old farmer met it with a serene smile, born of the memory of many victories.

"Hattie, bring that checker board. What kind of a game do you play, Teacher, side or centre?"

"I don't understand your terms," replied the schoolmaster, "but I play the regular openings, and then gauge my play according to my opponent's play."

"Well, I'll be switched!" exclaimed the farmer. "I always thought checkers was checkers the world over, but I never heard of openings, nor gauges, nuther."

"I see your board is not numbered," said the teacher. "Do you object to my marking the numbers with a pencil?"

"Mark all you want to, Schoolmaster," replied the farmer. "Put a sum in mental arithmetic in the middle, an algebra round the edges. Turn the board over, an' write out some examples in botany an' history on the back of 'er! Can't hurt the board any! Ernest, get some of that cider."

After the farmer had won four games in succession, he said to his son: "Here Ernest, you come an' play with the schoolmaster. This ain't exciting enough for me. I'll go an' set by the fire an' think."

Ten minutes later Ernest said: "Well, father, this may be fun for you, but it's rather monotonous for me. You'd better play with Hattie, Schoolmaster. You may get a game occasionally, if she's good natur'd."

So the teacher and his oldest pupil played together. But the memory of certain caustic remarks anent the afternoon's algebra recitation rankled in the young girl's bosom, and she showed him no mercy. She forced his pieces into unprofitable corners; she coaxed him after apparently unprotected "single men," only to slaughter the pursuer, and at last in completing an innocent looking combination, swept the board time and again.

Looking up in the midst of the fifth game he became conscious that their normal conditions were reversed. He knew that his face was flushed, and his brows in a tangle, while she was watching him with a cool, amused smile.

"What are you thinking of," he said.

"Algebra," she answered demurely. "It does seem—she gave him a 'man'—'as though checkers'—she gave him two more—'was so much easier,' and she swept the board."

When the teacher retired that night he registered a vow that he would beat girl at checkers, even if he had to give up his school and devote his whole time to studying the game. He lay awake a long time, gazing at the bare rafters above his bed, silver gray in the moonlight that streamed through his uncertain window, and thinking of this remarkable checker-playing family. He remembered the jovial old man's way of pretending to be in extreme fear, and how he would ejaculate: "Ah! now you've got me!" "Look at that, now! I never expected that." "Now, you have got me," and the way his knobby hand would hover over the board in simulated uncertainty.

He remembered Ernest keeping up a laughing conversation with his mother, and apparently not paying any attention to the game. He remembered Hattie, always watching him with that keen, amused smile, and moving her pieces with swift, sliding touch of a slim, white hand. Then he wondered why he had never noticed her hands before. Also, he remembered a certain vivid color in her cheeks, and wondered if it showed the same by daylight.

It may have been a week after this evening that Edna Bristol, Hattie's pretty but dull seatmate, found the day too short for her lessons, and had to "stay after school."

Hattie obtained permission to wait for her, and after every one else was gone she said to the teacher:

"I think you have a checker board here, Mr. Field. Won't you show me how to play by numbers?"

The schoolmaster rather shamefacedly got out his board and his books: "Rudiments of Draughts," "Spathy," and "Robertson," and they played games and variations by the dozen. And pretty Edna seemed to find the atmosphere conducive to study, for she mastered the grammar lesson thoroughly.

The next day Edna said:

"Teacher, I can study after school better than any other time. May I stay tonight?" And so the programme was extended.

Now a young man cannot play checkers with a pretty girl night after night without coming to give fully as much attention to her as to the game; consequently the schoolmaster felt as though a great blank spot had moved into his life one afternoon when Hattie without looking at him, left the house immediately at the close of school.

The following afternoon a big, fresh-faced young fellow, whom the schoolmaster had never before seen, called for Hattie, and took her driving in a very dashing equipage. Edna volunteered an explanation after school. "That's Bill Keeler," she said. "He's Hattie's beau, and he wants her to get married. His mother has promised to give him the farm if he'll get a wife before Christmas."

This news threw the schoolmaster into the sulks. The young farmer visited the school, being received with bashful cordiality by the "big boys and girls," and with cold civility by the teacher. He took Hattie to the Thursday evening singing school, and was driving with her and Edna every day.

This week was one of misery for the schoolmaster, though his checker board was some consolation. But sitting alone in the darkening schoolroom while the snow whirled high around the windows he would imagine that vivid face, lit by great luminous eyes, opposite him. Or, as he looked from book to board, he would see the swift flash of a slim, white hand above his own.

The week ended at last, and the young farmer returned to his home.

"He's coming again Christmas," Edna said to the schoolmaster.

Monday evening Hattie stayed after school was dismissed, bending a flushed face over a perfectly recited algebra lesson. After a long silence the schoolmaster said, with stiff dignity:

"I am glad, Miss Bates, that you still retain some interest in your studies."

There was no answer.

"I fail to see," persisted the teacher, "what there is so remarkable in that young fellow that he should take up all your time."

"Still no answer."

"Come, tell me, Miss Bates, what on earth he is noted for."

She looked up sideways into his face. "Pa says," she answered gravely, "that he is the best checker player in the county!"

"Can he beat me?"

The question meant a good deal. With a reckless flash of her great gray eyes, and dropping into the Michigan country dialect, which the schoolmaster had labored months to eradicate, she answered:

"Um huh! Beat the boots off'n you!"

The schoolmaster was furious. He took the checker board and flung it into the stove. The books were about to follow, when when he felt a little hand laid on his arm, and turning saw Hattie, with tears in her eyes. "Don't!" she said, "I should be lonesome without—without the books!"

The schoolmaster dropped the books and kissed his pupil.

Then the little hypocrite assumed an air of mighty dignity, and said: "The school laws don't allow this form of punishment!"

"Are you going to marry that fellow?" he asked peremptorily.

"I don't know."

"Will you marry me?"

With a droll little smile she replied:

"If you please, Mr. Field, that isn't in today's lesson."

As that was all the satisfaction he could get, he went to consult with his father.

"Well, Schoolmaster," said the old gentleman finally, "Hattie has explained the hull thing to me. When Bill is here she thinks she likes him best, and when you're here she sort of cottons to you most. Now, why don't you and him play a game of checkers to decide it—winner takes the girl—eh?"

"I agree to that," replied the teacher.

The proposition was submitted to Hattie, and she, after some consideration, accepted it.

Now, you mustn't take no advantage of Bill," said the farmer. "He's ccm'n Christmas Eve, an' we'll have the game then, an' the weddin' afterward. You mustn't keep Hattie after school, nor come to see her till then."

The schoolmaster got a new checker board that night, and every evening he studied alone, carefully noting the moves of the great games in his books.

"Science will tell," he said to himself. "These games were played by champions, and the results are certain as fate."

At last the day came, and at 5 o'clock the schoolmaster went to the Bates residence.

There was a jolly crowd of neighbors present. The old house was overflowing. Preparations were going on in the kitchen, and the smell of roast turkey and coffee was everywhere.

The minister was there—a nervous little man in an uncomfortable black suit. The teacher's rival came a few minutes later.

Then Farmer Bates took the floor. "Neighbors an' friends," he began oratorically. "I suppose you know that the schoolmaster and Bill Keeler here are going to play a game of checkers for my girl Hattie. Now, I'll point Dave Nash an' Uncle Tommy Bink to be empires, an' you all understand that if any one makes any suggestion on the game it'll all have to be played over. The weddin' will be right after the game, an' then we'll have supper. Place your men, empires!"

The rivals were seated, and the board placed between them.

"Here, Hattie," the farmer called, "you set here where they can both see you, an' then they'll know what they're playin' for."

Hattie gave a timid greeting to the two young men, and took the seat indicated. Then the great game began.

The schoolmaster played slowly, relating every move to some game played by the old champions. Keeler played with a dash that carried him victor in countless contests.

The spectators crowded around them, breathless at first, then as the game slowly progressed making whispered comments. "One of the elder women sang a little, softly, and someone in the background whistled part of a popular air. The "empires" watched the game closely.

It was a great game, and it is a pity that a record of the moves was not kept. When the thirtieth move was made, the old farmer blurted out: "By gum! 'til be a draw?"

Now, the schoolmaster, who was playing the black, was preparing to move 1—5, for his thirty-first move. His hand hovered over the place, but still he hesitated. Just then Hattie began to whistling a queer little tune.

Much surprised, the schoolmaster paused.

"Well, Hattie, that is the dumbest tune I ever heard," said her father.

"That tune," replied Hattie slowly and distinctly, "has fifty-nine variations."

The schoolmaster was just touching the piece, but the word "variations" stopped him. He stole a quick glance at her, but she was looking resolutely at the carpet.

"Must be the tune the old cow died on," laughed the farmer. "Which variation was you whistling?"

"I was whistling the fourteenth variation," she answered.

The stormy cloud surged up over the schoolmaster's pale face. "The Laird and Lady" had fifty-nine variations given in his book, and there on the board before him was the identical situation that he and Hattie had noticed and studied in the fourteenth variation.

Now he remembered Wyllie's wonderful play of 16—20, and black to win.

Holding his breath, he made the move.

"Lost the game, Schoolmaster?" shouted the old farmer, but the schoolmaster controlled the moves.

Again 13—23, and every checker player stared in amazement. Again 20—27, and then it slowly dawned on them that the teacher won the game by a series of remarkable moves.

One more move, and then the piece on 2 went the "long jump," removing three pieces and winning the game.

The players rose, and the people crowded around the successful one, with hearty congratulations.

Bill Keeler slipped into the hall unobserved, and after putting on his great overcoat, cap, and huge lambskin mittens, made his way out and started for the stables. As he passed the kitchen door Edna came out and stopped him.

"Going home, Mr. Keeler?" she asked.

"Yes; I haven't anything to stay for," he answered.

"You'll be lonesome drivin' that twelve miles all alone," said Edna sympathetically.

"Yes," he answered, "considerin' that I expected to take some one with me, it'll be dum' lonesome!"

The contract between that moonlit drive, as he had pictured it to himself, and as it would now be, struck him with full force. He pulled his cap over his eyes. His vocabulary was not extensive:

"Dum' it!" he said; and it is doubtful if any fate could have got more than that from him.

"I'm awful sorry for you, Billy," said Edna softly, and then he saw that the pretty, foolish creature was crying.

She had thrown a white woollen "diamond-dust" thing over her head, and her blond hair blew around her face. The sparkling moonlight fell on snow crystals, diamond dust, and tears, making dazzling brilliants of all.

Bill Keeler's mind moved slowly, but when she repeated "I'm awful sorry," he realized that sympathy is a blessed thing. He took her hand—he slipped into his arms.

The small boy who saw this scene from a "proscenium box" behind the rain barrel, could never go on from here in his report. "They stood so close together 't I couldn't see what they were doin'!" he said afterward, "an' they jest whispered."

"Where on earth is Bill Keeler?" asked Farmer Bates.

"Guess he's gone home," suggested Uncle Tommy.

"Don't let him go!" exclaimed the hospitable farmer. "Here, Ernest, you run an'—the kitchen door opened, and there in the doorway stood Bill Keeler with his arm around Edna."

"I come for a wife, an' by jingo! I guess I got one," was all he said.

There was a double wedding and a supper to be remembered.

Sometimes, in these later days, when Prof. Field finds his wife's country wit too sharp for him, he says:

"You know you really proposed to me, for it you hadn't helped me to win that game you would have married Billy."

To which she replies sedately: "It was purely my interest in checkers, dear. I couldn't bear to see a good game lost by a foolish move."—G. W. Rose.

## ALSO PARALYSIS.

## The Stricken to be Seen in Every Community.

Many Cured of this Appalling Form of Living Death by Using Dodd's Kidney Pills.

The most startling example of human helplessness is the paralytic.

The victim excites your commiseration, but with eye clear and mind still unclouded he resents your interest.

The most hopeless sufferer of all is he of the tottering gait and dragging feet.

He of the palsied hand stiffly pressing the benumbed side is to be seen everywhere you go.

The most convincing proof that this pitiable condition is the outcome of kidney disease is the fact that Dodd's Kidney Pills cure it.

Not generally recognized as a kidney disease, it succumbs to kidney treatment.

And that is all Dodd's Kidney Pills were ever claimed to be.

That paralysis should even be placed on the list of curable diseases stands to the credit of these Pills.

Did you ever know of a cure? Just think a moment!

If you do, it must have been the work of Dodd's Kidney Pills, for no other medicine ever yet cured.

Evaporated Potatoes.

Evaporated potatoes, prepared in the same manner, as evaporated apples, are to be put on the market from Minnesota next fall. Last season's potato crop was so large that many millions of bushels were wasted, and experiments were made in evaporating potatoes. The experiments were successful, and two big factories for preparing potatoes in this manner are building.

IN FAVOR WITH THE DOCTORS.

Dr. Godbout, M. P., Beauce, Que., Speaks in Highest Terms of Dr. Agnew's Catarrhal Powder.

When a member of the medical profession, hedged in as by a large measure of conservatism, expresses an opinion of a proprietary medicine it means a good deal.

Dr. Godbout the popular member in the House of Commons, of Beauce, Quebec, speaks in highest terms of Dr. Agnew's Catarrhal Powder, not alone as a professional man, knowing the nature of this remedy, but from a personal experience.

He has used the medicine for catarrh, and freely lets the public know of the remarkable, speedy and effective nature of the medicine in all cases of the kind. One puff of the Powder gives relief in 10 minutes.

Sold by H. Dick and S. McDiarmid.

Revival of an Old Lawsuit.

A 300-year-old lawsuit came up the other day in the Bavarian courts, apparently as far from a settlement as at the beginning. The village of Burgirm in lower Franconia, which is now part of Bavaria, brought the suit in 1595 against the Lords of Thuringen for 2,000,000 marks, the value of a forest of oak and beech trees belonging to the community which the lords had appropriated.

Vultures cannot discover a carcass by the sense of smell. They rely upon their sight when in quest of food.

A VANCOUVER FRUITER.

In British Columbia rheumatism is very prevalent, and very hard to cure owing to dampness of atmosphere. Mr. W. F. Beggs, the well-known fruiter of Vancouver, B. C. says: "I suffered intense pain for over four years from rheumatism of the ankles and feet. I doctored with everyone, even employing a Toronto specialist to treat me but could not get cured, and had almost given up in despair. A friend told me how South American Rheumatic Cure had acted in his case and advised me to try it. The very first bottle gave me immediate relief, and I am now on my second bottle and am quite entirely cured. I consider it the only cure for rheumatism."

## A STUDY OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS.

Dignity, Euphemisms, Avocations, and Hopes of Up-to-date Undertakers.

Although the word "undertaker" is a manifest euphemism meant to hide the nature of the trade for which it stands, the undertakers long ago sought further to disguise their profession by elegant phraseology. Nobody but a pauper is now buried in a coffin by an undertaker. The wealthier dead are laid away in burial caskets by funeral directors. The undertakers of this town as a class are an interesting, if somewhat grisly, subject of study. Nobody who has ever really known an undertaker can doubt the truth and realism of the gravediggers' talk in "Hamlet." The modern funeral director of this town is not a gravedigger, but he is a man of small reticence, touching subjects that most men prefer to avoid. He has become calloused by use to such things, and he has an unpleasant way of dwelling upon certain details of his profession, as had Shakespeare's gravediggers.

Outwardly the New York undertaker is almost offensively respectable person.

There is a tradition of the trade that imposes neatness upon the premises. Undertakers are divided as to the exact proprieties of decoration. Most affect ebony trimmings to their offices, but a few substitute white paint for black with startling effect. Undertakers in New York commonly join with their main business one or more of three or four avocations. Many keep lively stables, so that the coach that carries a sable company to a cemetery by day whisks off a bride in white silk and orange blossoms by night. Some undertakers are also manufacturers of funeral offerings, wreaths, and emblematic devices. Some show little signs which read "Pinking done here." Some deal in cut flowers. A few are in the real estate business, and the announcement "Lodgings for single gentlemen," beside a gaping coffin, serves to recall Lamb's pleasantry on this subject in one of his droll letters to Manning in the far East.

Undertakers in New York are of all nations, and it is usual for a foreign family to employ in the case of death an undertaker of their own race.

There are a few negro undertakers. "Entrepreneur des pompes funebres" is the occasional announcement in the French quarters, and each nation has its own euphemism for a business regarded with some popular prejudice.

The New York undertakers, although nearly all anxious to surround their business with pomp and dignity, differ greatly in their methods. A few rise quite above the display of caskets and content themselves with a modest announcement of their trade. Many have the privilege of placing advertisements in the fronts of churches. In such case the undertaker acts as sexton at rather less than current rates, the advertisement of the sign on the church front being an equivalent for part of the pay. It is a great card for the ordinary undertaker to have the victim of an accident or a murdered person or a suicide sent to his shop. This brings the coroner, an official investigation, and a free advertisement in the newspapers. Such undertakers like to use the word "morgue" as an equivalent for their places of business, and are all eager to see their names and addresses in the newspaper report of the coroner's inquest. The truly swell undertaker is anxious to avoid this sort of notoriety. It would be almost fatal to his fame to have a "slovenly, unhandsome corpse" brought into his place of business after a murder or on accident. He is a grave and respectable, semi-clerical person, learned in the etiquette of grief, and unparalleled in making plausible by a nice itemizing the lump sum of a large bill. To have the hope of burial at his hands is almost a temptation to suicide. He does not rise early to read the death announcements in the morning newspapers and get his card to the homes of the afflicted ahead of his rivals. On the contrary he can count with certainty upon his clients. He regards certain respectable families as his natural prey and never sees any one of half a dozen feeble millionaires roll by in a carriage without a vision of a hearse in which that same millionaire must soon take his last ride.—N. Y. Paper.

Turkish Papers in Armenia.

"I have not received a para for the past twenty weeks, and I cannot buy, even clothes," exclaimed the official who was told off to "shadow" me one day and night in Erzeroum.

"Do they pay you salary regularly?" I inquired of the head of the telegraph office at Kutek. "No, Effendi, not regularly," he replied; "I have not had anything now for fully eight months. Oh, yes, I have; a month's salary was given to me at Bairam."

"How do you manage to live, then?" "Poorly." "But you must have some money to go on with, or else you could not keep body and soul together?" "Allah is good."

"You have now given me some money yourself." "Yes, but that is not for you; it is for telegrams, and belongs to the state." "Well, my shadows will have grown considerably less before the state beholds the gleam of it. I keep for myself all money paid by the public. I take it as installments of my salary. It does not amount to very much. But whatever it happens to be, I pocket it."

These men are, of course, petty officials, but their case is not essentially different from that of the majority of their betters, and Judges, officials, deputy governors, etc., are to the full as impetuous and incomparably more greedy.—Contemporary Review.

Decade Rings.

Decade rings, or rings having ten projections on their circumference, were once very popular, not only in religious orders, but among serious people. They were used to keep account of the number of prayers recited. The knob or large setting designed a Paternoster; the ten projections each counted an Ave.

## Armenian Cookery.

The attention now directed to Armenians may arouse interest in their culinary methods. Powerful seasoning is not obnoxious to them. Tarragon, onions, rue, cinnamon, coriander, cloves, pepper, mustard, cumin, and salt are employed. These are all used in a sauce for a sort of ragout not unlike Scotch haggis. An Armenian sandwich is recommended to givers of afternoon teas. This is made of two thin slices of wheaten bread covered with white chicken. Grape sirup is poured around it, with alternate rows of almonds and nut kernels, pieces of cheese, olives, sprigs of tarragon, and rings of hard-boiled eggs. It is sprinkled with salt and eaten, cut in slices, with virgin oil. If this be not enough to satisfy a delicate appetite, it may be followed by a sweet composed of thin cases of pastry that envelop a rich amalgam of almonds and fragrant flavoring, served in a sauce of melted butter and sugar. As provocative to renewed gustatory effort Armenian hors d'oeuvres are suggested. These consist of spiced vinegar, cheese, red eggs, olives, pickled fish, and asparagus in oil. If all this be not enough to stay hunger in anticipation of an 8 o'clock dinner, thin pancakes fried in oil, floating in a rich sirup, and covered with rose water, may be effective.—New York Sun.

An Historic Church.

The historic church in Paris of Notre Dame des Victoires is to be restored. The church was founded in the early part of the fourteenth century by the Guild of Cross Bowmen. The church is noted for the ancient and historic monuments which it contains, amongst the most notable being the monuments of Counts Egmont and Hoon, who are represented on their way to execution.

The number of patent medicines is not so great as might be supposed, there being only 1,352 in the reports.

A Danger Signal.

The loss of sense of smell is one of the early effects of catarrh. It is a danger signal. Partial deafness and impaired eyesight are other results of the disease, which becomes more distressing as it progresses, and it not checked will gradually develop the most serious complications.

Better heed the first danger signal and endeavor to effect a cure. Hawker's catarrh cure is a positive remedy, and a simple one, easy to take. Its effects upon a simple cold in the head is instantaneous and complete. The most severe cases of catarrh yield to a course of treatment by this remedy, and a complete cure is in due time effected. It costs but 25 cts. per box. A single box will convince anyone of its merits. It is sold by all druggists and dealers, and is manufactured only by the Hawker Medicine Co. (Ltd) St. John, N. B.

BORN.

Westville, Jan. 21, to the wife of J. D. Fraser, a son Milton, Jan. 20, to the wife of Dwight Cain, a son.

Halifax, Feb. 4, to the wife of B. J. Mulcahy, a son. St. Croix, Jan. 30, to the wife of D. Spence, a daughter.

Riverdale, Feb. 4, to the wife of Alex Bain, a daughter.

Lunenburg, Jan. 31, to the wife of Lorenzo Parks, a son.

Ottawa, Feb. 5, to the wife of C. W. Treadwell, a son.

Turo, Jan. 26, to the wife of W. Burton Johnson, a son.

Eastville, Feb. 2, to the wife of William Brown, a son.

Everett Mass., Jan. 22, to the wife of R. D. Sutherland, a daughter.

Baddeck, Jan. 29, to the wife of Joseph S. McLean, a son.

Turo, Feb. 6, to the wife of Kenneth McIntosh, a daughter.

Milton, Jan. 30, to the wife of James W. Power, a daughter.

Halifax, Feb. 9, to the wife of W. F. Linton, a daughter.

Halifax, Feb. 9, to the wife of H. W. McIntosh, a daughter.

Lunenburg, Jan. 31, to the wife of George Nelson, a daughter.

Kempton, Jan. 28, to the wife of Charles A. Ison, a daughter.

Dalhousie, Jan. 31, to the wife of James Shaw, a daughter.

Upper Stewieck, Jan. 27, to the wife of Alex Power, a daughter.

Parrsboro, Feb. 3, to the wife of C. M. Fowler, a daughter.

Dartmouth, Feb. 2, to the wife of H. S. Creighton, a daughter.

Ottawa, Feb. 4, to the wife of Sir Charles Hibbert, a daughter.

Memramook, Feb. 1, to the wife of Annie M. Vineau, a daughter.

Three Mile Plains, Jan. 25, to the wife of Hedley Lunn, twin boys.

Clark's Harbor, Jan. 25, to the wife of Dr. G. W. Brown, a daughter.

Parrsboro, Feb. 4, to the wife of Stuart T. Day, twins, boy and girl.

New Glasgow, Feb. 3, to the wife of Rev. A. Robertson, a daughter.

New Glasgow, Jan. 25, to the wife of Daniel H. Cameron, twin boys.