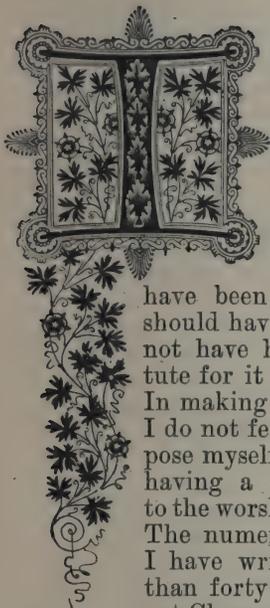


INCONVENIENCES OF THE CHESS-BOARD.

BY ALPHONSE DELANNOY.



I had no fear of offending the susceptibility of the average Chess amateur whose epidermis is so exceedingly sensitive, the term "*Inconveniences*" would not have been the one which I should have chosen; I should not have hesitated to substitute for it the word *Dangers*. In making such a declaration, I do not fear that I shall expose myself to the reproach of having a disposition hostile to the worship or love of Chess. The numerous articles which I have written during more than forty years in the different Chess periodicals are there

to attest the interest which I have in the game, as well as in its votaries; that is proved by those published, amongst them, in the *Strategie* by those entitled "*Souvenirs*," etc. (September 15, 1874), "*Philosophie du jeu d'echecs*" (May 15, 1875), My fiftieth (March 15, 1877), *Prerogatives of the Chess-board*, an article crowned in Paris, 1878, A First Lesson in Chess, an article crowned in England, 1881. If the reader takes the trouble to look at these articles he will acquire the proof of my assertion.

But, as an impartial and experienced observer, I think it will be useful to point out, especially to the new generation, the inconveniences which may arise from an exaggerated love of this game, and of the sometimes fatal consequences, which this love may determine. Nevertheless, my observations must not be considered as precepts to which one ought absolutely to be bound, but as simple advertisements of which the good sense of the reader will appreciate the merit, according to his prudence, character and taste.

I sum up this beforehand by quoting what la Mere Michel said at the tea party of Madame Giboret: "If good cannot be done with that, it certainly cannot do harm."

Let us examine first what is the nature

of the Chess-player. It is divided into four principal phases: 1st, the dawning insight; 2d, the desire of progress; 3d, the love of the game; 4th, the passion for it.

First, the hatching.—One is born a Chess-player as one is born poet, artist, mathematician, man of war, or sailor, and according to the precept of Boileau, it is in vain that one would attempt to attain the height of the science of Chess, if Heaven in creating him has not breathed upon him a spark of the mysterious flame which would develop itself later in proportion to the care which he will have taken to entertain it. The taste for Chess is awakened, so to say, in the cradle. Look at this child of four to five years of age; he has seen on the last evening his father and a friend playing at Chess. Without understanding anything of it, he has felt himself drawn, magnetized by those little pieces of wood, he has followed their moves, and, even more, the impressions of the contending parties, he has dreamt of it, and, on awakening, his first care is to go slyly and steal the box, to draw from it men and pieces, to admire them, to roll them through his little fingers, to make them leap, dance upon his bed; then, emboldened, he goes and seeks the Chess-board, arranges the pieces according to his fancy, but finishes by making a noise and awakening papa and mamma who first cry, grumble, but laugh in their sleeve, for there is a new acquisitism to the family of Chess. Henceforward, to his toys, he prefers those little pawns so well turned and carved, so gentle, so minute, those knight's, lilliputian centaurs whose slight gambits have so excited his surprise, those rooks whose round and robust forms give them a lofty appearance, those queens with their rapid and impetuous moves, those kings with their little crowns and their imposing majesty. Ah! how pretty, charming, amusing all this is! He is no more astonished by the pleasure which his father experiences in moving those pieces, and when he has grown a little older, he will play also with papa, and the day comes when he will beat him. But, to realize this hope, this desire, it will be necessary to

know, to learn and to work ; from thence emanates necessarily the second phase, the desire of progressing.—Let us say, however, that this desire will not be manifested instantaneously. The boy must have handled the pieces for a rather long while ; it is necessary that he should have drawn them often from the box and considered them as simple playthings, that he should have had patience to assist in the sittings of amateurs, and afterwards, to follow the moves and to have explanation of them, and then comes the idea of trying his ability, his memory, his force, and the will to improve. This will, assisted by natural disposition, is the most precious element of success, and the child very soon will experience its effects. It would be desirable that the fathers of families, the chiefs of institutions, should utilize with care the predilection of an infant for Chess ; because, as I have already shown in one of my essays, this game develops without fatigue and in an admirable manner, and even with pleasure, the faculties of intelligence ; it combines, in effect, the exercise of memory and calculation, the habit of reflection with the rectitude of judgment, and specially with the greatest motor of progress, the satisfaction of self-love. Men devoted to the education of youth ! meditate on these observations ; they emanate from a person experienced in the career of teaching and who has reaped its blessings. The exercise of the Chess-board far from offering any danger, presents, on the contrary, many elements useful to youth and even positive and serious advantages.

The love of Chess considered as a recreation of the mind has nothing pernicious. Its influence upon the moral faculties adds even powerful attractions to the charm of this game. In the midst of this innocent arena, anxieties are calmed, passions are quieted, griefs are engulfed, and imagination, placing itself in the infinite varieties of combinations, produce moves so bold and so bright that they seem to come from inspiration, and amply reward the athlete for his supreme efforts. What is most marvellous, however, in the struggles of the Chess-board is that success absorbs not all the glory for the conqueror ; a fair portion remains still for the unfortunate adversary, if, in the struggle, he has given good proof of his courage and patience and has illuminated its last moments by some strokes and sparks of

the holy fire which animated him. Dying then, he can exclaim "All is lost but honor."

From this point of view, which is that of the greatest part of the amateurs of Chess, we may, certainly, encourage the worship of Chess and provoke with all our efforts the incessant augmentation of members of our scientific family. But this love turns sometimes into a true passion.

This passion is divided in two sections ; that which aims at superiority, and that which results from an irresistible allure-ment which may be called *Mania*.

When the love of Chess has become a passion, then it assails you continually, restrains you, envelops you, holds you like the Dragon of the Apocalypse, and in spite of superhuman efforts to get out of its claws, or resist it, you are subjugated and enslaved forever. In consequence, before finding that you are drawn too quick by the love of Chess, beware ! so that this love may not change into passion. Examine, should that happen, to what subjection you expose yourself ; measure the depth of the abyss of deceptions, and the fatal consequences caused by a perfidious allure-ment and the height of the pedestal upon which you hope to be raised. Assuredly superiority in any masterpiece of intelligence, whatever it may be, is surrounded by many seducing illusions in the midst of which you see a glorious aureole which, perhaps, will shine in future generations. This hope explains the strides, the endeavors, the sacrifices and the ambitions of competitors, but, it is in Chess as in the Kingdom of Heaven ; many are called, a few chosen.

Let us analyse, indeed a few of the elements indispensable to obtain this superiority even in a science which is only a game, and which appears, in consequence extremely easy to many people because, at first sight, they cannot have a glimpse of its difficulties. Well ! this superiority requires first the sacred fire, that is to say, that secret influence which drives you forward, crying to you as the voice of the angel to the Wandering Jew : "go ! march ! march ! always march !" You must not heed barriers, neither difficulties, nor rocks, nor sands, nor obstacles. You must be endowed with that will, that firmness, and perseverance which nothing can shake, with resistance which nothing discourages, with vigilance which cannot

be beguiled, with foresight from which nothing is concealed, and with that power of penetration with which, in the most difficult positions you can survey and comprehend the imminence of the danger, so that success may emanate from it. It is necessary to embrace, at a simple glance, the nature of your resources and the need of making immediate use of them. It is necessary, then, as it is to the eagle, to have this piercing vision, able to dive suddenly into the whole surrounding horizon and to discover, at its extremity even the weakest enemy, the smallest shelf, the least appearance of snare or treason; you need that promptitude to make a decision without running the risk of being taxed with rashness in consequence, or precipitation; it is necessary, in a word, to know how to put into practice that resource to which, till now, you have devoted all your intelligence, so that you may profit by conjectures and probabilities, lift up the veil of the most mysterious combinations, foresee thus, the designs of the adversary before he can have formed them; it is necessary not to lose, in vain hesitations or in illusory conceptions, those moments so precious that they decide the event of the struggle: it is necessary, in fine, in case of need, to raise yourself into the immensities of the infinite, to take to yourself the wings of inspiration which alone give victory.

If you do not feel in a state for fulfilling these conditions, believe me, reader, renounce your scheme; your ambitions how noble soever they be, they will soon overpower you. But I am afraid that my advice may be only a voice in the desert; for, how few amateurs are there whom one would class as belonging to the 1st or 2d class, who would be disposed to abandon their unrealizable hopes? So, what shall we say of the perplexities, the cares, troubles and deceptions, the realities and the wounds of self-esteem experienced by these pretended princes of the science?

Here it would be proper to recall the wisest precept of antiquity inscribed with golden letters upon the temple of Delphos—“*Gnothe Seauton*” (Know yourself). This knowledge would be rather easily acquired if we valued our nature at its true dispositions; but we are dazzled by our pride so that we call anger, activity; hatred, jealousy and envy are only desires of succeeding; laziness is want of re-

pose, satisfaction of senses; natural feelings, silliness, lack of intelligence; nonsense, witty remarks. This blindness is one of the most terrible sores of humanity, and Seneca has said right—

*Illi mors gravis incubat
Qui notus nimis omnibus
Ignotus moritur sibi.*

From self-ignorance comes necessarily illusion, which is a dreadful calamity. It is incredible how many people there are, who from the fact of their being endowed with a certain talent in such or such a faculty, imagine that everywhere they will have the same success. They do not comprehend that the Creator has, in a manner, limited the speciality of their abilities, and that it does not follow because they are very clever in mathematical science, in literature, in painting, that they ought to be so in the science of Chess. Professors Laplace and Binet, men of the highest order in mathematics, never passed the 4th class at Chess. The great Napoleon never understood it. Labourdonnais never comprehended whist, Mouret, dominoes, Sasia, billiards. And see with what wisdom, what admirable foresight the Maker has appointed among men special capacity for special pursuits! Could France have become proud of her most illustrious heroes, Charlemagne, Francis I, Henry IV, Bayard, Turenne, Conde and Napoleon, had these great men been like Philidor, Deschappelles, Labourdonnais, or Morphy? How many masterpieces of science, literature, arts and philosophy would have been lost if Galileo, Raphael, Michel Angelo, Corneille, Racine, Bossuet, Massillon, Shakespeare, Victor Hugo, Mehul, Haydn, Weber, Mozart and Rossini had devoted their immortal genius to the worship of Chess! All is, then, for the best, in the best of worlds.

The mania for Chess.—Let us examine a little the consequences of it. There is a great number of votaries who, without being blinded by fallacious ambition, have contracted such a habit for the Chess-board, that the game has become necessary to them, an indispensable necessity and an element without which they cannot live or act. This irresistible allurements is, perhaps, more dangerous than the struggle for superiority, for, it often compromises material interests by the loss of time, negligence of business and family, and as it is almost irremediable, it determines

often facts of the highest gravity, and the annihilation of home happiness.

Let me give an illustration in a story which is unfortunately too true.

In 183- might be remarked at the Regence an amateur very fond of Chess. He was about 45 or 50 years old and though, one might see, not very young, he had preserved all the petulance, ardors and language of youth. An open physiognomy, a certain vivacity of spirits, manners somewhat original, but frank, formed the chief peculiarities of that gentleman. Sprang from an honorable family of Brittany, Mr. De P had preserved his patriarchal manners and the proverbial stubbornness of his country. Twenty years' residence in Paris had not brought any modification to his character nor to his countenance. Single man and master of a beautiful fortune, he had simple tastes, and the Regence was his sojourn by choice. In order to devote himself as soon as possible to the exercise of his favorite game, he often went thither to breakfast, and like the cat who catches a rat, he fell on the first comer, forcing him, so to speak, to play, by offering him either fabulous odds, or discharging him beforehand from any loss of money and ordering the waiter to serve him with a demilasse, and a small glass of brandy from the good corner, or a cup of chocolate, or any thing he liked. Once seated, he did not move until 7 or 8 in the evening, after having consumed three or four various adversaries, a dozen of biscuits washed with Madeira and liquors; regularly, ten or twelve games. Ah! that was a jolly fellow and a famous prey for the sparrow-hawks of the epoch!

The independence of his position allowed him, assuredly, to give himself to the eccentricity of his tastes and his passion for Chess, and his life flowed sweetly, gently, and without clouds in the midst of the Regence, and the intimacy of some safe friends. Nothing seemed to be wanting to his well being; but, upon this earth, an everlasting happiness does not exist. And our man began to see it. What, in effect, is more afflicting than to live only for one's self, to have no other occupation, no other cares than those of his own person, no other affection than that vulgar intimacy drawn from the daily contact with certain individuals more or less pleasing? Returning home, finding himself alone, he thought often of these mat-

ters. He understood, at last, he had a heart, and he wanted another to respond to the beatings of his own; he thought he wanted eyes which could read in his looks the secret of his feelings and desires, a soul which could envelop him with solicitude, devotion and love.

Such were the dispositions of spirit and the causes of the melancholy which suddenly befel Mr. De P., when, one evening, in an artist's very modest saloon, he happened to meet a young person of very agreeable features, with light and elegant shape, with blue eyes, whose soft look recovered the flames which emanated from them at intervals, and possessing a voice whose pure and beautiful sound penetrated the heart like an echo from Heaven. Miss L. was, in a word, a ravishing young lady. At the accents of her voice, Mr. De P. found himself profoundly moved. His entire soul was suspended on the lips of the singer, and believing he had hit upon the reality of his dreams, he took the resolution not to let escape such a wonderful opportunity. People like Mr. De P. like to act promptly, and the morrow morning Mr. De P. began to carry out his design. First he obtained necessary references upon Miss L.'s family; he learnt she belonged to poor but honest parents, and should he ask her in marriage, his demand, they said, without doubt, would be received with a cordial welcome.

Mr. De P. absented himself for many days from the Regence. Everybody was astonished at his disappearance. It was talked of and commented on in every way, but no one imagined the motive. He reappeared one evening, but almost unrecognizable. To his once animated features, sparkling with health, had succeeded a pale figure, a dull air. He placed himself before a Chess-board, began to play, but the formerly brilliant amateur, misled through inconceivable distractions, committed blunders upon blunders, breathed not a word, confined himself to deep sighings and the master of the establishment might have been able to apply to him the observation which his predecessor had made to a young gentleman who troubled the players by his languishing interjections, such as; "My dear Sophia! my pet, my beloved Sophia! my darling Sophia!" "Sir, when one is enamored, he must not drink the coffee of the Regence."

This state of things was prolonged some

weeks. One day, one of the waiters distributed to comers, letters announcing the marriage of Mr. de P. with Miss L. A Prussian bomb falling in the midst of the Academy would not have produced a more powerful effect.

"Do you see!" they said, "this sullen fellow, this sharp old boy, this *pince sans rire*, this man rather wild amongst women, this strong, stoical, sceptical man, whose impressions seemed to be imprisoned in a Chess-box, exactly like others, has allowed himself to be grappled." "Good gracious! how weak man is!" said one. "Worse than that," cried another, "how man is *bête!*"

Such were the exclamations of the *habitués* of the Regence; the greater part of them, it is true, old firebrands, almost extinguished, whom a slight breeze would have hardly been able to reanimate, a band of living mummies, having already lost every souvenir of the enchantments of their youth. Then, our gentleman is married! During a certain while, a total eclipse of his person at the Regence. The sparrow-hawks lengthened their necks uselessly, planted in vain their eyeglasses on their noses. Mr. De P. did not appear any more. Ah, because all entirely ravished by the charms of the honeymoon, he enjoyed, near to his young wife, the most delightful seductions. He did not cease to look at her, to contemplate her, to admire her, to interrogate her eyes, the beatings of her heart, to gather on her lips the reply to his desires, to proclaim her his joy, his idol, his happiness, his life, his all. He was proud to walk with her in the Bois de Boulogne, to show her as a new star, to introduce her in the most elegant *salons* in the capital, presenting her as a pearl, a diamond, a comparison which the enchanting voice and the talent of Madame De P. fully justified.

However, in the midst of this atmosphere of conjugal felicities, Mr. De P. was not slow to feel badly at ease. In the expansions of intimacy, he became suddenly taciturn. In vain madame approached him, took his hand in her own, inclined her beautiful forehead upon his lips to beg from him a kiss, and arming herself with her most gracious smile; all this feminine artillery could not succeed in arousing the morose husband. "What hast thou, dear Charles? Go on, sir, a little smile for your little wife. No? ah, that is cruel! 'tis awful! You love me

no more! How unfortunate I am!" and a flood of tears, that mysterious talisman that women know so well how to employ, came to inundate the visage of the suppliant, and often, at the same time, that of the husband. What was, then, the cause of Mr. De P.'s melancholy? Ah, it was that one dares not play less with impunity with Chess than with love! Once that Chess enlists you, it enchains, it magnetizes, it captivates, it electrifies you in displaying to your mind indescribable and continuous attractions. It makes a fire burn in you which soon devours you, a passion which must be satisfied, an enthusiasm which transports, a thirst for the unknown and the infinite, which draws you, in spite of yourself, like the depth of an abyss. The wooden queens had again taken their empire over the conjugal queen. After three months of absence, Mr. de P. repaired to the Regence. Let it remain to the reader to picture to himself the effect of this resurrection! A thousand shake-hands, a thousand smiles welcomed the infant *prodige*, and they converted the golden calf into tankards of punch, and made a frightful noise which annoyed everybody, and amongst others, the game of the old notaries (*huissiers*), of whom I have spoken in my gallery, staking the enormous sum of ten sous (one penny), and one of whom distracted by the uproar, made an atrocious fault in leaving his queen to be taken, and lost the game, crying, "May the devil take you away altogether!"

After that day Mr. De P. frequented the Regence, but during the day only. By-and-by he stayed there later, and often he was obliged to call for a cab, and to pay double fare to the coachman to recover lost time, and to invent during the ride, some pretext which would explain his delay. Madame was pouting, a little cross; she was kissed, and all was over. This lasted during a few weeks, but the appetite comes with eating, you know. One month after, Mr. De P. began to come in the evening, and took back his former habits. Madame, patient and resigned during the first days, finished by being astonished at these periodical departures. Of a passionate nature, she had in her veins some drops of tropical blood, and a certain amount of jealousy in her heart; rather puzzled, like every pretty woman, excessively susceptible on account of the homage due to her charms, she

suspected some treason, and set spies upon her husband, and learned the truth. Who shall paint the indignation of the lady? How? it was a wooden queen who competed and monopolized the conjugal tendernesses, who deprived her of the cares, attentions, kindness, and of those thousand trifles, so charming, and attesting the empire which any fair wife exercises over her husband! It was a horror, an atrocity, an infamy, a *comble*! The evening of the discovery, she waited upon Mr. De P., who did not return until 1 o'clock A.M. "Whence do you come?" she exclaimed. "From the opera." "It is not true." "What?" "I say it is not true—you lie!" "By jingo, you appear angry and very jealous, my darling; my pet——" "There is no more darling nor pet; you disdain me, you leave me, you abandon me: you treat me as an old piece of furniture, or an old pair of boots, and for what? for some bits of wood. It is hideous, sir, atrocious, horrible!" "Ta, ta, ta! what an uproar for nothing!" "Nothing, sir? you call it nothing to be perjured to your oaths, for you have sworn to consecrate your entire life to me, to love me, to idolize me for ever as your sovereign good, and you run away from me, you leave me alone, dull, weeping! Look here, sir, you would deserve to be paid in the same coin. I do not lack admirers—adorers, even. Take care, then; you are warned, remember!" So, thereupon, madame entered the door of her sleeping-apartment, which she closed violently, giving three turns of the key and pushing the bolts.

Night brings advice. On awakening on the morrow, Mr. De P. thought he had found a magnificent means to reconcile the susceptibilities of his wife with his passion for Chess. He sought a cabinet-maker and gave him the order to bring him at falling night four tables, with Chess-boards upon them, to take up the whole by the servant's staircase without noise, and place them in his room. He went from there to the Regence, to invite for the evening half-a-dozen of braves, and returned, followed by a boy carrying under his arm four magnificent Chess-boxes. "Perfect!" cried he, "I will have a Regence to myself: some cigars, some cups of tea, some flasks of old wine and brandy, some biscuits, and the *tour* is done! What the devil will madame require now? I shall remain in my house. Perfect, perfect!"

The orders of Mr. De P. were punctually executed. After his morning rounds, Mr. De P. did not go out again. He employed then all that a contrite spouse could use to recall loveliness upon the features of madame, sweet language, smiles, kisses, but madame had remained sullen, insensible, and cross. During the dinner Mr. De P. renewed his efforts. Madame did not smile. This sad repast was about to terminate, when Mr. De P. said to the servant: "Sarah, prepare tea and biscuits for this evening; bring them into my cabinet." "You receive this evening—you have not informed me of that!" "Oh, do not be disturbed—they are only old friends." "No matter; I must always make my toilet." "What for? You are ravishing so!" "A compliment, dear me!" "Not at all—a truth." "Gallantry, indeed! upon what herb have you been walking?" "In following you, upon that of grace and amiability." "You are foolish." "Yes, of you, dear angel." "Then you do not go to the Regence this evening?" "No." A ring at the bell interrupted this dialogue, an unfortunate *contretemps*, for this dialogue tended terribly to a sentimental conversation and to a capital reconciliation.

The servant announced four persons, all of them unknown to Mme. De P. "Who are these people?" "You will know a little later." At the same instant a fresh ringing of the bell. The servant announced six new names. "You have then invited a whole regiment! Good gracious!" "Be graceful. I have nothing else to ask from you."

After the customary salutations, Mr. De P. opened the door of his cabinet, glittering with light, and whence were reflected, arranged in order, the pieces of four games at Chess. At this sight, Mme. De P. bounded like a liberated hare, and cried: "Ah, dear me! Not that, *par exemple*!" "Not a word now, madame, if the presence of my guests does not please you, retire." Mme. De P. did go away, exasperated. This little scene between the couple had taken place in a kind of a *parte*. The guests were scarcely aware of it. Accustomed to the disdain and the absence of the fair sex, they placed themselves, began the struggle which was interrupted solely by frequent absorption of cakes, croquets, cups of tea, small glasses of liquor and wine, and they combated until two o'clock in the morning.

The facts now turn to a drama. The morning which followed this stormy evening, Mme. De P. went to light a monster fire, a true *auto da fe*; she waited the going out of her husband, and precipitated in the flames the four superb games at Chess and their boxes. As to the tables, she sent them to the *salle de vente*.

Mr. De P., re-entering, opened the door of his cabinet; he saw it empty, and thought he guessed the truth. He rushed into the chamber of madame. "Where are my Chess-tables?" said he. "Removed—gone!" "And my Chess-boxes?" "Burnt!" Anger of the husband and marital correction!

A woman, a young and pretty woman, does not forgive a slap on her face. From that moment continued quarrels, bad humors, were heard and seen. Suspicions of Mr. De P., surprise and discovery. Arrangements, henceforward, impossible. A demand in separation in body and in goods followed, and was acknowledged by tribunals ordering only a pension of 3,000 francs per year to be paid to the wife. Return of Mme. De P. to her family, of Mr. De P. to the Regence, where he demanded, but in vain, of Chess a remedy for his moral afflictions, for he had those griefs which nothing can appease, and the unhappy Mr. De P. died, still young, in the midst of perplexities and eternal regrets, without having ever seen his wife again.

Passionate amateurs, open your eyes and reflect!

Melancholy things are not in my nature, nor in that of the French character, to discourse about. I will not, then, terminate this subject by so sinister a recital. Let us finish this picture by some remarks a little less dull, some humorous details, but, however, of incontestable truth.

The passionate amateur of Chess is naturally, or rather compulsorily distracted. When he leaves home for the Chess-club the haste with which he starts, to arrive in proper time, makes him commit some error, and he almost always forgets something. He will take the handkerchief of his wife instead of his own, and he takes snuff; he will put his cigar-case in his pocket without cigars. He will carry two gloves of the same hand, or of different color. He will forget his spectacles, his cravat, or his collar (that has happened many times to me), will pass before the house-keeper without asking

whether he has any card or letter for him, an important question since gentlemen porters are created into Swisses, and endowed with the trusteeship of proprietor, and will spring forward like an arrow, imitating the merchant of the city in London, hurried, giddy, almost mad. "Thou goest to the Regence, dear?" his wife will say to him. "I have some gentlemen and ladies to dinner. As you pass the butcher's order him to bring me a sweet-bread, and go to Chevet and get a *pate de foie gras soufflé*." The husband commands a leg of mutton instead of a sweet-bread, and brings a lobster instead of a pie—sometimes he forgets all. "Maria, your soup is too salt." "Oh, monsieur has come back so late." "Your chicken is excessively dry." "Monsieur has come back so late." "There is no butter on these vegetables." "Monsieur has come back so late." "Where is the cream for the chocolate?" "Spoiled; monsieur has come back so late." "And what have you in its place?" "Nothing." "How, nothing? I must go and see to that," and he impetuously leaps into the kitchen. What does he find? A stout fellow, six feet high, disguised like a *cuirassier*, imbibing the cream with a pot-ladle, before a bottle of Bordeaux, attacking it, and sipping like a monk. "Who is this, Maria?" "A cousin." "Ah! your cousin is not disgusted. He wants cream and claret." "He was so hungry, so thirsty, poor thing, and I tell you, sir, the cream was spoiled." "And the bottle of Bordeaux?" "A jest—there is not a bit of cause for you to be excited."

To these details shall I add, the rendezvous forgotten, the curses of the servants, the glacial reception of the family, the tears of children and babies, to whom had been promised cakes, playthings and bonbons, and which have been left with the merchant, and possibly the reproaches of conscience for having perhaps neglected graver interests, and sacrificed them to the passion for Chess.

In spite of the rude aspect of this picture, do not allow yourself to believe that my passion for Chess is in any way diminished. Senior of the French amateurs, rather, it is true, a dull privilege, acquired by fifty-five years of exercise, a thing which I should do better not to boast of, my flight in the scientific regions, after so long an interval has never surpassed that of a pretty yard goose. I would die such

as I have lived, faithful to my tastes, to my devotion to the cause of Chess, to my enthusiasm of which I again feel the magic effect with as much delight as in my earlier years. But, I owe so much to Chess! Independently of my natural dispositions, I am attached to it, as I have already told by gratitude, for I owe to it

the resurrection of my faculties, engulfed, as they were, by the disasters which had overwhelmed me. I owe to it, at last, that grain of reputation with which the members of our family have been so kind as to favor the badinage of my pen.

Enghien, July, 1882.

THE LIGHT AND LUSTRE OF CHESS.

(Translated from *Salvio*.)

FROM WALKER'S "CHESS AND CHESS-PLAYERS."

During the pontificate of Gregory XIII., of pious and blessed memory, there was dwelling in Rome a young man, by name Leonardo de Cutri. He was short in stature, of mild and pleasant manners, and from this was known as Il Puttino ("the little lad"). Leonardo had been sent by his parents to the city of the Pope, to study the law; but took up a preference for Chess, in which his progress was so rapid, that notwithstanding his extreme youth, he speedily acquired a degree of force which enabled him to conquer every player in Rome.

Now the first Chess Professor of this time in Europe, was Ruy Lopez, surnamed the learned clerk of Zafrá; who being in high favor at the court of Philip II., of Spain, had been recently endowed by that monarch with a benefice, and had been consequently forced by custom to come and tarry some short time in Rome, that his nomination might receive the sanction of the holy Pope. During this space Ruy Lopez could not resist the desire to show his skill, and sought out the resort of the first Chess-players; playing with them day by day, and winning of them all, until they confessed their joint inferiority to the then absent Leonardo. At this, Ruy Lopez challenged the Puttino to the field, and they played many beautiful games upon even terms; but at length the wily skill of the youth gave altogether way before the experience of the veteran, and our brave Leonardo was defeated to his great disgust: while to his failure was added much scorn on the part of his adversary. The Puttini hoped next day to take his revenge, but was again defeated with renewed expressions of pride

and scorn; and was so mortified that he suddenly left Rome for Naples.

During the next two years Leonardo remained in Naples, constantly employed in the study and practice of Chess; and, finally,—attaining so high a degree of perfection as to be certain of now being able to conquer his ancient enemy, Ruy Lopez,—resolved to seek out the latter, be he where he might. Meanwhile Ruy Lopez, having succeeded in getting his grant of the benefice confirmed, had left Rome for Madrid; whither Il Puttino prepared to journey, first resolving to visit Cutri, his birth-place; and with this view prevailing upon Don Fabrizio, the Prince of Gesualdo, a Chess player of great skill and renown, to fill his place, during absence, in the famous Neapolitan Chess Academy (or Club.)

Now it chanced that the famous Chess player, Paolo Boi, termed from the place of his birth, Il Siracusano, being himself as yet a young man, and fired with generous ardor at hearing everywhere of the Puttino's fame, had left his country at this time to measure his own force with him; and arrived in Naples resolved to see which was the superior in skill. Boi obtained next day an introduction to the Prince Gesualdo, in whose house he found several games at Chess going on. He concealed his name, and sat down to watch the progress of one of these parties played by Leonardo and the Prince himself, without Paolo's knowing the Puttino was really present. The game appeared to be won by Leonardo, but Gesualdo who had the move, might have drawn it by a deeply hidden stroke of play, which Leonardo perceived, but doubted its discovery by