

THE FATAL PROBLEM.

I had known him for several years. He was a bright young fellow of twenty-six or eight, good-natured and handsome and apparently without a care in the world. His name was Jo Daniels, and his profession that of bank clerk in one of the heaviest establishments in the city. Jo boarded at the Grand Avenue Hotel, where I also had taken up my quarters, and here we met frequently to talk over Chess matters, or enjoy a combat over the board. He was a fine player and always gave me odds—in fact none of the players in the city whom he had encountered were able to defeat him. This was not to be wondered at, for Jo had studied Chess from boyhood, and studied it thoroughly. His library on the subject was one of the finest I ever saw, and I never tired of poring over the rare and interesting and practical works comprising it.

Of late Jo had partially given up the game and devoted his leisure time more to the study of problems. This, no doubt, was owing in some measure to the scarcity of strong players with whom to battle. For of strong Chess-players there are very few in Milwaukee, or if they do abide here they keep their light well concealed. Perhaps they are afraid, like Brother Barker of the Wisconsin Central, to come out of their holes and risk defeat. Be that as it may, finding no more Chess-players to conquer, Jo took to solving problems, and soon achieved as great success in that branch as with the game. He won the first prize in the solvers' tourney of the *Chess-Players' Chronicle*, second prize in the tourney of the *Detroit Free Press*, first prize in the *Hartford Times* tourney, second prizes in the *Globe-Democrat*, *Commercial*, and *Chess-Monthly* competitions, and prizes from BRENTANO and *Turf*, the *British Chess Magazine*, *Lebanon Herald*, *Schachzeitung* and *Toronto Globe*. I have frequently witnessed him solve twenty or thirty two-movers at the rate of sixty per hour. Occasionally, thinking to puzzle him, I would take to him some tough nut that I had solved after two days' hard study and, chuckling to myself, request Jo to crack it. Jo would look at it generally but a minute or two, and remark something like this:

"Yes, that's very pretty, very pretty, indeed. The Knight goes *there!*" and I would walk away mentally cursing my stupidity. The idea that I should require two days for a task that he could accomplish in two

minutes was galling; and another search for a fresh brain-splitter would follow, only to terminate as before. BRENTANO's for September, however, came along in due season, and in looking over the splendid collection of problems it contained, one in particular attracted my attention. The more I studied it the more muddled I grew, and finally, with an exclamation of satisfaction, I started for Jo's room.

"I've got you now, old boy," said I. "Here is a riddle that will require a *little* more than your customary two minutes attention to unravel."

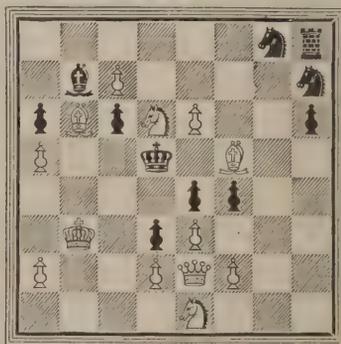
Jo smiled upon me patronizingly. He had heard and refuted that expression so many times that it only served to make him more confident of victory.

"Good! let me see it," said he.

I immediately directed his attention to the following problem.

Problem No. 97.*

By CHARLES KONDELIK.—PARIS.



White mates in five.

Jo took the magazine and his countenance at once grew serious. With his usual quickness of perception he realized the immense difficulty of the task before him.

Five, ten, twenty, thirty minutes passed, and Jo was still studying. I saw that I had him beat, and giving a sort of a whoop of victory I turned and left the room. Jo did not come down to supper that evening, and when I met him the next morning his face was haggard and pale and his eyes bloodshot. I smiled sardonically.

"Oh! yes," said he, "I have failed so far to find the correct solution, but I am not beaten. I'll fetch it yet."

* This problem foiled BRENTANO's entire corps of solvers. The only solutions sent in began with the move named in the facts here recited.

And day after day he pondered over Kondelik's masterpiece. He became careless in his attire, lost his appetite for the many good things the table afforded, scarcely eating more than one meal a day, indifferent to all save his duties at the bank and the solution of that wonderful problem. So the days passed until one evening he met me—a smile on his face and a happy light in his eyes.

ered the one defence to the move Jo had named. The expression of distress which came o'er his features as I demonstrated his error would have struck pity to the heart of almost any one, but I simply enjoyed his suffering; I was heartless, and my sleep that night was the sweetest I had experienced for years. Towards morning, indeed, I was aroused by what I thought was a noise in Jo's bed-room, which was just



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"I've found it, old boy!" said he gayly, "Queen to Knight's fourth does the business; just try it!"

I was disappointed. I had felt that he was conquered and had gloried in his defeat; and I was not willing to believe that he had discovered the long sought solution.

"Tell that to the marines," said I, incredulously. "I'll prove you wrong before I sleep!"

I didn't much expect to do it, but set to work, and by nine that night had discov-

ered the one defence to the move Jo had named. The expression of distress which came o'er his features as I demonstrated his error would have struck pity to the heart of almost any one, but I simply enjoyed his suffering; I was heartless, and my sleep that night was the sweetest I had experienced for years. Towards morning, indeed, I was aroused by what I thought was a noise in Jo's bed-room, which was just

* It is one of the mysteries to us how the picture of poor Jo got into the possession of the *London Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, and we have not time now to inquire into it; we thank that paper, however, for saving us the expense of making a plate. (Ed. B. C. M.)

ulting, and soon heard Jo's door open and close with an ominous creak, but I paid no attention to it and dropped off to sleep again. As I recall that moment, and think how easily I might have changed the course of events, had I but known, had I even suspected the terrible resolution which my friend had formed, the remorse I have since suffered is aggravated a hundred fold.

Jo slept later than usual that morning, so I walked down town alone. Crossing Spring Street bridge I observed some men dragging the river.

"Who's drowned?" I inquired of Rowland, the policeman on duty there.

"Dunno," he replied, "man came running down here early this morning—jumped in and never rose again. Been grappling for him over an hour."

And no presentiment of the terrible fate of poor Jo Daniels entered my mind!

That afternoon on opening the *Wisconsin* the first thing my eyes fell upon was the following blood curdling announcement:

DROWNED HIMSELF!

SAD DEATH OF JOSEPH DANIELS THE BANK CLERK.
HE JUMPS INTO THE RIVER AT FOUR
O'CLOCK THIS MORNING.

Just as we go to press we learn that the body of the man who it is known, jumped from Spring Street bridge into the river at four this morning, has been recovered. The suicide proves to be Joseph Daniels, book-keeper for Bullion & Co. of this city. A note found in one of his pockets says: "*Kondelik is to blame for this.*" Who Kondelik is, nobody seems to know, but the detectives have the matter in hand and will probe the mystery to the bottom. It is said that they have a clue to his whereabouts and are already on his trail. Fuller particulars in the next edition."

The paper dropped from my nerveless hands—my head whirled—I almost fainted. Alas! it was I—not Kondelik—who was to blame, and I can never while I live release myself from that harrowing thought.

Milwaukee, Dec., 1881.

C. R. HANCHETT.

J. H. ZUKERTORT.



ETURNING from Berlin, where in September last, he had participated in the Master-Tourney of the Second Congress of the German *Schachbund*, Dr. Zukertort made a tour of

the continent of Europe, visiting many of its chief Chess centres, among others, Leipsic, Dresden, Cologne and Rotterdam. At these and other places he gave exhibitions of his skill as a blindfold player; at Leipsic he encountered twelve *fair* players at one time and won ten of the games without sight of the boards; he also met some of the strong players of that city, some singly, others consulting against him; at Dresden he beat Dr. Schmid and Messrs. Berber and Schellenberg in consultation, and also Dr. Schmid in a hard-fought single combat. Throughout his tour Dr. Zukertort was almost always successful in his games, whether played blindfold, simultaneously, or *vis-a-vis*, and showed his undoubted superiority over all he met. We have not yet heard of his

arrival in London and presume he is extending his tour of conquest. We reproduce here an excellent portrait of this famous player which we find in a late issue of the *Illustrirte Zeitung* of Leipsic. There are two names which stand forth as rivals of that of Zukertort for the highest place on the Chessroll,—Steinitz and Blackburne; the foreign Chess *quid nuncs* have been discussing the question of priority with some warmth since the Berlin Congress. Mr. Steinitz's claim to be accorded the highest place, apart from the internal evidence disclosed by his published games, is chiefly based upon three events: his success in the Vienna Tourney of 1873, his victory in the match with Blackburne, and his victory over Zukertort in a like match. Zukertort's record consists of his success in the Paris Tourney of 1878, his victory over Blackburne in their late match, and his winning second prize at Berlin in 1881, while Blackburne's record shows his victory in the match with Gunzberg, his being third in the Paris Tourney of 1878, and his signal victory at Berlin in 1881. But it is idle to attempt to rank these players by any estimate based upon their public records. In fact, were we to attempt it,