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A GAME OF CHECKERS.

The Move One Player Made and His Subsequent Soliloquy.

"It's your move," she smiled.

He smiled back at her, his hand hovering above the checkerboard.

"Really?" he asked, looking at her in a witty sort of way.

"Huh-huh," she softly answered.

"Really?" he asked again.

"Huh-huh," she breathed and demurely dropped her eyes.

His success began to intoxicate him, and he felt that never before had he been in such strong form, never had his wit been so keen or his manner so engaging. His spirit soared, and he looked upon his opponent with a kindling eye.

"There!" he said, making his move at last.

"There?" she asked, giving his ejaculation the appearance of having been conceived in subtle humor. "There?"

"There!" he repeated.

They made eyes at each other, and she moved one of her men. He briskly moved one of his.

"No, no," she faintly murmured. "You must take me."

"I must what?" he cried, making a motion.

"Take me!" she whispered.

"Take you?"

She nodded her head without looking up, and the next moment he had taken her and two hearts beat as one.

"And will you always think of me?" she asked as he was bidding her goodby after he had measured her finger for the ring.

"How could I help it?" he asked.

"Always?" she insisted.

"Always!" he repeated.

"Will you think of me as you go home tonight?"

"Every step of the way."

They parted at last.

"He loves me!" she whispered to herself. "Oh, he loves me! I knew it from the first. Maybe this won't make some of them jealous! And I'm the first girl he ever loved, and it's to be a diamond band! Oh, oh!"

And as he walked home he turned a troubled face up to the moon, halted suddenly and addressed the night:

"When she began that funny business about taking her I ought to have sat tight and kept my fool mouth shut; that's what I ought to have done!"—Kansas City Independent.

FOREST FIRES.

The Watchful Rangers and the Way They Fight the Flames.

In almost any of the western mountains the traveler sees the fire warnings of the forest service, and he is likely to meet some of the rangers. You will find them crossing the high Sierras in California, in the Crazy mountains of Montana, among the Olympics in Washington or following the old Apache trails along the mesas in Arizona. Wherever he is, the ranger keeps a keen lookout for the smoke of forest fires, and in the clear western atmosphere even a little smoke column can be detected from afar. As soon as he discovers it the ranger takes his ax and shovel and goes as only a western horse and rider can. Many small fires are stopped by this watchfulness, but there are others which take many men many hours to subdue. A fire in a chaparral so thick that a man can hardly force his way through it and parched by six months of drought makes hard and trying fighting. Then there are fires in the big timber among the dead trees of old windfalls and overhead fires that spread faster than a man can run. If unchecked, they will burn for weeks over thousands of acres of timber.

And all this destruction may be caused by a carelessly left campfire or a match dropped from horseback. The sheep men used to set the forest on fire purposely, for the year after a fire the burned acres yield fine forage. Happily this practice is discontinued. Sparks from locomotives now set more fires within the national forests than any other cause. Camping parties are the next worst offenders. Indians, stockmen, miners and lumbermen who travel continually in the forests very seldom leave campfires to spread and do damage. They know too well the results. For a time almost every year the citizens of Portland, Ore., lose sight of some of the great mountains around the city on account of the smoke from the burning forests. There is little doubt that since the white man settled in the west more timber has been uselessly burned than has been cut and used.—Arthur W. Page in World's Work.

A Startling Dish.

Over in Chelsea a schoolteacher was engaged in her task of teaching a class of foreign children the English language. She was trying to make her pupils understand the meaning of the word fright and asked if any one in the class could give a sentence containing the word.

Quick and confident was the reply of one little girl: "I have a sentence, teacher. We had fright eggs for breakfast this morning."—Boston Herald.

Defined.

Burglar Trust Manager—You will be required to turn night into day, to throw aside all sentiment, to enter the houses of the best families regardless of their feelings, to act the hypocrite and, if necessary, to go to jail. Applicant—Um! You don't want an ordinary burglar. What you want is a newspaper reporter.—Life.

Two Powers.

Tommy—Pop, what is the difference between firmness and obstinacy? Tommy's Pop—Merely the difference between will power and won't power, my son.—Philadelphia Record.

NOAH'S RAVENS.

A Knotty Question Answered by a Blacksmith Preacher.

Many years ago there lived in one of the mountain counties of Tennessee a blacksmith who to his reputation for honest work during the week added that of being a powerful exhorter on Sundays. Held in high esteem by his neighbors, possessed of a sufficiency of this world's goods for that primitive community, he seemed to have solved the question of terrestrial happiness, but the "thorn in the flesh" is indigenous to all climes and conditions, and for the blacksmith it grew in the person of one Tom Bradley, a tall, lank mountaineer, who was the wit and wag of the neighborhood and who also occupied the unenviable position of skeptic in that orthodox community.

Tom delighted to prod the smith with certain inexplicable Biblical statements, and these encounters sometimes resulted disastrously for the exhorter, causing him much humiliation and making him, as he said, "wrassle in prayer and cry to the Lord and spare not."

Once at the yearly camp meeting the old man was giving his "experience" in the tone and manner that were considered devotional in those parts. "My brethren, ah," he said, "as I was a-standin' in my shop an' gittin' ready to shoe Billy Hite's old gray mare, ah, 'long come that son of a gun Tom Bradley, ah. He ast me ef I believed everything in the Bible, ah. I said everything from kiver to kiver, ah. 'Believe that yarn about Noah bein' shet up in the ark with all them different sort of critters, ah?' sezze. 'Sl, I done swallered Jonah an' the whale, ah, an' I wa'n't a-goin' to gag at Noah, ah.' 'Well,' sczze, ah, 'ef that raven Noah sent out got lost, ah, where did all these here ravens come frum, ah?' Brethren, I thought fer a minute, ah, that old Satan had got the underholt on me, ah, an' was about to thoe me, ah; but, thank the Lord, ah, I jest thoed back my head, ah, an' the sperrit of knowledge plum filled me, ah, an' I sez, sezzi, 'It was the old he raven, ah, that got lost, an' the old she raven was a-settin' on five eggs in the nest, ah, an' that's where these here ravens come frum, ah.'"

THE OPERA.

It Appears to Have Originated In Italy In the Year 1600.

The way Streatfeild, author of "The Opera," traces the development of opera through the centuries is most clear and concise and leaves you with the impression that upon the matter of history, at any rate, he is master of his subject. Opera, it is shown, was the result of an attempt made by some Florentine amateurs to revive the lost glories of Greek tragedy. They failed to get back to the conditions of Athenian drama, but in failing they unconsciously laid the foundations of a new art form which soon worked itself into the affections of the people. The beginnings of opera might be said to date from the year 1600, when a public performance was given in Florence of Peri's "Euridice" in honor of the marriage of Maria de' Medici and Henry IV. of France. This work consists almost entirely of accompanied recitative, which was the invention of these Florentine reformers, and the voices were accompanied by a "violin, chitarone (a large guitar), lira grande, linto grosso and gravicembalo or harpsichord, which filled in the harmonies indicated by the figured bass." It is interesting to know that in this very primitive work the composer tried to follow as closely as possible in his music the ordinary inflections of the speaking voice. Monteverde, who was a contemporary of Peri, but whose first opera was produced some seven years after "Euridice," made a similar effort to reconcile music with speech, and many years after Gluck and still later Wagner tried to do so, and it is amusing when one knows how far in other directions music as an art and opera as a convention have progressed since 1600 to think that old Peri was probably closer to the Debussys and Reynaldo Hahns of our day than all the great men who have come between.—New Age of London.

A Big Mistake.

A fool, a barber and a baldheaded man were traveling together. Losing their way, they were obliged to sleep in the open air, and to avert danger it was agreed to watch by turns. The first lot fell on the barber, who for amusement shaved the poor fool's head while he was sleeping. He then woke him, and the fool, raising his hand to scratch his head, exclaimed: "Here's a pretty mistake. You have awakened the baldheaded man instead of me."—Liverpool Mercury.

Getting Closer.

"When I first knew that man," said the observant waiter, "he couldn't have been making more than $1,000 a year. I'll bet it's $10,000 now."

"How do you know?" asked the other.

"He used to give a fifty cent tip, but now he only gives me a nickel."—Philadelphia Press.

A Model Cookbook.

"What! You have written a new cookbook for your wife? How did you do it?"

"Easy enough. I wrote the name of each dish and underneath it the restaurant where it can be had best."—Fliegende Blatter.

The watched pot never boils. A gas meter is different.—Washington Times.

Be wise today. 'Tis madness to defer.—Young.

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