

Passing Notes.

BY JACQUES.

Laugh where we must, be candid where we can.—Pope.

Mr Gavin Brighton, writing on "The Marriage Act" in last week's "Digger," says that the R.C. Church's daughters "include all churches, from the Church of England down to the Salvation Army, Presbyterians included." Which somehow reminds one of the prayer once offered up at a church gathering, "for all those present, including the reporters, oh, Lord, for we know that even the souls of these are precious in Thy sight."

It is an axiom that people cannot be made moral by law. America seems to have made a further discovery, viz., that people cannot be legislated into sobriety. It is now some months since that "great and glorious republic" went dry, but, if cabled reports are to be credited, it seems not one whit nearer the great desideratum of the prohibitionist. The drug habit has increased to a staggering extent, and enormous quantities of that crude kind of "whisky" that quickly adds to the populations of lunatic asylums, are being illicitly manufactured, smuggled hither and thither, and sold under the very eyes (and, it is whispered, with the actual connivance) of the authorities. Worse still, where even that poor article is not procurable its place is taken by very queer and not too healthful substitutes. The trade in wood spirit is booming; more hair wash finds its way to the stomach than to the heads of Uncle Sam's children; flavouring essences are in great demand, and perfumes command a ready market. Anything at all that can be swallowed, and that will for a moment make this grey old world look less dull, is sure of a ready sale. The consequences do not matter. All of which goes to prove that the prohibitionist, in his stubborn ignoring of the more stubborn facts of life and human nature, threatens to bring on us far greater evils than those he is endeavouring to combat. Also it reminds me of a little story.

It was in a back blocks hotel. Trade had been unusually brisk, supplies were exhausted, and there was little hope of the carrier coming for a week. A party, on pleasure bent, strode into the back bar and demanded "same as usual." The drinks were served, and promptly swallowed. Next moment several gasping, raging men were roaring at the landlord. "Wot in 'ell djer mean by it," screamed one, "that was blanky pain-killer yer gave us."

"Hush," said Boniface, in an agonised whisper, "don't let the fellers in the front bar 'ear yer, or they'll think I'm favourin' yer. Yer see, they've 'ad nothin' but Elliman's Embrocation all day."

"Say, Jax," said Bill, in a tone of discontent, "Why the 'ell don't yeh write somethin' useful in that paper of yours once in a while?" I modestly replied that I had had occasional thoughts of doing so, but have been afraid that the editor and public would not understand it. But, I asked, what was the trouble now? "Well, Jax," he went on, "there's a flamin' lot of things I can't make 'ead or tail of, an' I'd like yeh to explain 'em in your rag. For instance, as I think yeh know, I've been wantin' a decent suit an' an overcoat for a long time, an' the old woman 'as been worrying me for blankets ever since the beginnin' of winter. But after payin' fifty bob for a suit for each of the boys an' eight-an'-six a pair for their stockin's, an' buyin' a few things for the girls I found there was nothin' left to meet the wants of the old man an' the old woman. I took it quiet all along, thinkin' that there wasn't enough wool to go all round, an' that it was up to all of us to grin an' bear it. An' now Jimmy Allen tells us that the reason why I can't get some decent clobber, an' the family can't sleep warm is because there's been a flamin' over-production of wool. Somethin' like a million bales of New Zealand wool on 'and that they don't know what to do with! An' fifteen quid for a suit! Blimey, but it's a puzzle. An' again, the other day I read in the papers that the tea growers 'ad so much tea on 'and that they was afraid there'd be a fall in price, so they decided to "regulate the output," as they call it, to prevent the damned calamity of cheap tea fallin' on us. Same with rubber (though, not ownin' a motor, I'm not so much in-

terested in that), an' other things. Seems to me that if they'd let us 'ave these things at a fair price we'd use more of 'em, so that they'd be as well off an' we'd be better. Hanged if I can understand it at all, Jax." And I have to confess that I don't, either.

The "News" tells an interesting little story of an Adelaide lady and her motor-riding "hubby." She suspected him of taking another young lady for occasional "touring excursions" (a neat euphemism), and, her suspicions being confirmed by the discovery in the side-chair of a garter other than the brand she wore, she set to work on the bike and side-chair with an axe, completely spoiling the appearance and utility of the whole turn-out. If her example is followed in Invercargill there should soon be a big boom in the local motor repairing industry.

Much of what the Rev. Hector McLean said at the unveiling of the Knox Church memorial to our fallen soldiers will be speedily forgotten, but at least one thing should find lasting place in our memory. That was his earnest appeal for greater charity—or, at least, justice—in our judgment of the faults and failings of our returned soldiers. Now that our sense of gratitude is dimming we are becoming more and more prone to measure their transgressions and shortcomings by our harsh, rigorous, everyday standards—to their, and our own, great wrong. "The war has made a waster of him," we often hear said, and always in contempt, rather than pity. In many cases it is true, no doubt, but even in those it behoves us not to be too ready with blame. There are many lads among us to-day whose lives, had it not been for the war, would have been bright and happy. But we took them and threw them—sacrifices on the altar of our own security—into a hell, of the horrors of which we can form no conception. Through months and years they lived in brutalising shambles, the battle madness always in them, and with Death as their daily companion. Small wonder that so many of them came back to us with disordered brains, shattered nerves, blunted feelings, and impaired moral sense. The wonder is, in fact, that any at all escaped these pitiful consequences of their hellish experiences. In judging these unfortunates, let us always remember that their blighted lives are a part of the price paid for our own safety.

In his report to the last meeting of the Town Council Mr Ronnie voices the very general complaint re "motor hogging" through our city streets. This is especially noticeable, he says, in Esk street, which seems to have become a recognised testing track for motors, notwithstanding the fact that the proximity of a large school makes undue speeding more than ordinarily dangerous and reprehensible there. Which is all very well, as far as it goes; most of us will heartily endorse the inspector's complaint. It is the proposed remedy, however, which provokes the laugh. "A special signboard should be erected near schools requesting motorists to slow down . . . during those hours when the streets are crowded with children." Could anything be more fatuous and futile? The plain fact is that if the motor hog is hoggish enough to disregard the presence of the little ones in his track, he is not going to be converted to decency and gentlemanliness by a mere municipal notice board. A better plan would be to supply every school child with a liberal supply of tin tacks, and instructions to ignore all laws of economy in their distribution in the vicinity of the schools and playgrounds.

Sweden is proposing to erect one of the largest wireless stations in the world, able to be in constant communication with North America.

In the recent census of Budapest the population was found to be 1,100,000. Before the war the population of the capital was 880,000.

The Nature Column.

(By "Student.")

"Student" will be pleased to receive notes on any branch of Natural History. Observations on birds, insects, plants, etc., will be equally welcome. If using a pen-name, will correspondents please enclose real name and address.)

Glad to see your letter, Norland. I agree with you that it is difficult to account for the quartz having travelled down the Mataura. On looking over the matter again carefully another aspect of the matter has cropped up. The water-tight clay overlying the white quartz gravel looks uncommonly like Papa rock. Now Papa occurs at the base of the Oamaruian formation under the limestone. Professor Park figures this in his geology, and the strata can be so seen at the Orawia and in the bed of the Waiau. If the water-tight strata should prove to be Papa then the water-bearing gravels are much more ancient than has hitherto been supposed. Some millions of years at the least. Owing to the enormous amount of denudation which has taken place since tertiary times it is harder than ever to point to the source of this gravel.

A knowledge of Southland's artesian water supply is highly desirable from a commercial as well as scientific standpoint, and notes on deep wells sunk in various parts of the district would be welcome. Many farmers in this district, have sunk deep wells and if the knowledge possessed by these individuals were brought together, it would prove both interesting and profitable.

I spent the Labour Day week-end with kindred spirits in a little run north to see the famous Castle Rock limestone. On the way up we inspected the limestone at Limehills. This stuff is full of fossils which are easily procured. We devoted a few hours to the Otapiri Gorge, which is no gorge at all being but a rather deep valley. The valley is interesting but we did not manage to strike a good bed of fossils. What we saw were Jurassic. In the bed of the Otapiri, however, there were many pebbles which were very like the Matai gravels. While here we were kept under close watch by the Acclimatisation Society's ranger who regarded our presence as suspicious.

The high road over the Hokonui into the Oreti valley is interesting, with many perilous loops and hairpin bends. The mysterious charm of the place has gone, the bush is down, and of illicit distillers we saw no trace. The hills are cultivated to a considerable height.

On Labour Day we proceeded over the Taringatura hills into a beautiful little valley. The rocks passed on the way were conglomerate with many fossils similar to those in the Otapiri, and would thus appear to be Jurassic.

The Castle Rock is typical of many of the limestone formations seen in the old world, the towering castellated formation providing as wild a bit of scenery as one could wish to see. It is surrounded by rolling peaceful looking hills which enhance the effect. The strata are tilted at high angles and the hill ends in a precipice some hundreds of feet high. Straggling vines and creepers clothe the faces in places, and the ubiquitous cabbage tree grows in almost impossible spots. Great obelisks tower perpendicularly or overhang in a way which makes cold shivers run down the back of the mortal creeping round their bases. Snails were found in great abundance. We did not see a single bloom of the clematis, and the only flowering plant which made any show was the straggly shrub, Corokia cotoneaster, whose little starlike yellow flowers enlivened the scene.

At the end of the hill are caves in a deep cleft in the rock. These caves are famous for the amount of avian remains found in them. The cleft surrounded by bushes made a trap which for untold years engulfed large numbers of birds, particularly those which were flightless. Moas, notornis, and several good bones of the extinct eagle harpagornis were found together with those of birds of all sorts which are still in existence. The explorers dug through about eight feet of bird remains. The finds were of great value. A full account will be found in volumes 25 and 26 of the Transactions to be seen in the Athenaeum. Librarian Farnall is always pleased to see people making use of his carefully arranged reference library and will go to all sorts of trouble to find the book you want.

The country above Wallacetown and up the Kingston line is having a mild drought, and though it rained in Invercargill we had nothing more than a slight drizzle. The Messrs Lindsay brothers of Glenkenich station who were our pilots to the Rock, have started to take rainfall records. Good luck to them. To other young farmers in this district with a mind above turnips and grass, I would say, "Go thou and do likewise."

DRAUGHTS.

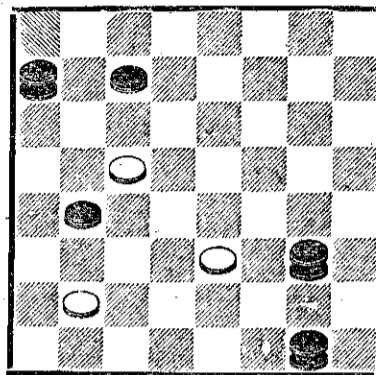
(Conducted by F. Hutchins.)

All communications of interest to readers of this column to be addressed to "Draughts Editor," 28 Biggar street.

The Draughts Club will continue to meet in Athenaeum on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons and evenings until further notice.

PROBLEM 34.

(By H. MacKean, Salt Lake City.)
BLACK.



WHITE.

Black to play and win.

Black 6, 17, Kings 5, 24.

White 14, 23, 25, King 32.

Not difficult, but will interest the amateur.

SOLUTION TO PROBLEM 33.

By A. Jordan, Champion of England.
(No. 154 in "Yorkshire Weekly Post.")

Black Kings 10, 11, 13, 14.

White 12, 29, Kings 1, 6.

Black to play and win.

10. 7A 17.14 5. 1 11.15

6. 2 2. 6 6. 9 13.17

7. 3 14.18 7.10 14. 9

1. 6 6. 2 29.25 17.22

14. 9 18.15 1. 5 9.13

6. 1 2. 6 9.13 21.17

13.17 11. 7 10. 6 13. 9

1. 6 6. 2 2. 9 22.25

9. 5 15.11 5.14 11.15

6. 1 1. 6 25.21 B. wins.

A. If 11.15, 12.8, 14.9, 6.2, 9.6, 2.9, 13.6,

8.3, 15.11, 1.5, 6.1, 5.9, and the piece

being on 29 instead of 21 appears to

force a draw.—D.E., Y.W.P.

VAR. 1.

29.25B 10.14 6.10 11.16

7.10 25.21 14. 7 18.15

2. 2. 6 15.18 2.11 16.20

11.15 1. 6 1. 5 15.11

6. 2 5. 1 B. wins.

Black wins by Second Position.

B. 2.6, 7.2, 6.10, 11.7, 10.14, 7.10, 14.7,

2.11.—Black wins by First Position.

VAR. 2.

25.22 6. 2 17.14 6.10

10.14 14.18 15.11 3. 7

2. 6 22.17 1. 6 10. 3

11.15 18.22 22.17 17.10

B. wins.

OLD FOURTEENTH.

(By W. Veal, Southampton.)

11.15 9.14 10.15A 2.11

23.19 22.15 19.10 22.17

8.11 7.11 6.15 14.18

22.17 30.26 1. 27.23 25.22

4. 8 11.18 18.27 18.25

17.13 26.22 32.23 29.22

15.18 3. 7 15.19 19.23

24.20 22.15 23.16 17.14

11.15 7.11 12.19 23.26

26.22 31.26 20.16 22.17

15.24 11.18 8.11 26.31

28.19 26.22 16. 7 14. 9

Drawn.

A. An interesting var.

VAR. 1.

32.28C 6.15 14. 5 15.24

2. 6 25.22 1.10 28.19

22.17B 18.25 27.24 8.11

15.19 29.22 19.23 22.18

17.10 5. 9 24.19 Drawn.

B.

27.23 23. 9 22.17 25.4

18.27 6.13 13.22 Drawn.

C. If 22.17, 15.19, and Black can draw

with a piece down.

"BETWEEN THE MOVES!"

What is the best thing to do between the moves? Probably it is not fully recognised that players may win or lose games when it is not their turn to play. Some are always at work, whether it is their turn or not, and the fatigue produced by such incessant strain accounts for the aggravating slips that so often at the end of a game destroy a fabric built up by much persevering effort. Others, regarding the time of waiting as an opportunity for rest and recreation, chat with

their friends, look at other games, and do anything but think about the business in hand, and, consequently, are liable to lose the thread when they come to resume the struggle. To look at the position with a fresh eye may sometimes be helpful, but the frequent changing of the point of view does not make for continuity. In any tournament there may be observed in operation a variety of methods of filling up the interval, approaching more or less nearly to these extremes, or taking a middle course between them, according to the idiosyncrasies of the players. There are those who can dreamily contemplate the position while consoling themselves with tobacco and refreshment, and there are others who find outlets for suppressed excitement in a feverish revision of score sheets, and a vigorous sharpening of pencils. It is not everyone who can relax the attention just sufficiently to review the situation calmly and with something of the detachment of an onlooker, while feeling no impatience at the protracted calculations of the adversary, which generally seem longer than they really are, and longer still if one harbours impatience.

N. Z. R. S. A.

PARLIAMENTARY NOTES.

No. 17.

(1) To ask the Minister of Internal Affairs whether the money forwarded from this Dominion to the Save the Children Fund in England is being disbursed to the relief of the starving children of Central Europe and by what machinery; also the exact amount lying undistributed in the aforesaid fund, and in the other funds to which New Zealand has sent contributions together with a statement of the amounts that have been disbursed.—Mr Downie Stewart, M.P.

Reply.—The Hon. Mr Anderson replied that monies remitted from the Dominion to "Save the Children Fund," London, were being distributed for the relief of starving children of Central Europe by the headquarters of the Fund, which is supported under the War Charities Act of England, 1916, assisted by the Allied Red Cross and other funds operating in the famine area. The appeal was a worldwide one and no information was available as to the amount at present in the hands of the organisation. Full particulars covering monies raised for other overseas funds were now being prepared for presentation to Parliament at an early date.

(2) To ask the Minister of Defence whether he will state on what date the military censorship of letters coming to this Dominion will cease. (Note: Correspondence which came from America and which was delivered here on the 2nd October, 1920, was opened and passed by the Military Censor.)—Mr Howard, M.P.

Reply.—Then Hon. Sir R. H. Rhodes replied that the military censorship automatically ceased when the War Regulations Continuance Act, 1920, became operative on the 6th October.

(3) To ask the Minister of Defence whether he will, during the recess, bring before Cabinet the question of amending the War Pensions Amendment Act so that dependent sisters of deceased soldiers who are residing in Great Britain may be provided for.—Mr McCallum M.P.

Reply.—The Hon. Sir R. H. Rhodes replied that the question of providing that War Pensions should be available to dependent sisters of deceased soldiers residing outside of New Zealand would be submitted to Cabinet as requested by the hon. member.

(4) To ask the Government whether returned soldiers and other dairy farmers who, through lack of butter factories in their districts to which to send their butter fat are making their own butter for supply to grocers and for town consumption will participate in the allowance to be made by the Government out of the Consolidated Fund to equalise local export prices?—Mr Field, M.P.

Reply.—The Right Hon. Mr Massey, Prime Minister, replied that the question is under investigation at the present time, but it is pointed out that under previous equalisation arrangements it has not been necessary to subsidise the sale of dairy and milled butter. Makers of this butter by forwarding to cool store could obtain the export values of such butter. The prices for first-grade dairy and milled butter were £13 1s 4d and £12 7s 4d per cwt. respectively.

Both crocodiles and alligators have voices, and the sounds they utter are terrifying at night to those who have to cross streams in which the reptiles lie. The crocodiles note varies between a hoarse bark and a deep bellow.