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STEINITZ PLEASE, NOT STODGE.

In "Abinger Harvest" there is an essay called, I think, "the Game of Life" which I have often enjoyed. My chief pleasure in it has sprung from the passages in which Mr. Forster describes his hopes, fears, and ultimate disasters on the fields of Chess. "I play Old Stodge" he says (or I seem to remember him saying) I play Old Stodge; and when the dull stolid barricades have been erected, I move inevitably into a locked embrace with my opponent. We sway to and fro. The strain increases. Suddenly a muscle cracks. There is a wild flurry of heaving bodies, a beating of the air, a gasp—then silence. A corpse is prostrate in the centre of the ring. Whose corpse?" Well, of course, it was Mr. Forster's.

And then he plays the Evans—with the same result. "And that" he says "isn't quite life"; and so passes on to consider bridge.

Old Stodge? Who was Old Stodge, and what combination of creeping pawn advances did he devise? P—K3? Must we know him by some such formula? or can we, delving hopefully into the history of chess, find a more famous name for him? Steinitz, for instance? And now my secret is out, and you know, or half know, why I have felt drawn to write. It was not merely to indulge in delicious memories, or to attempt to pass on to others the story of poor Stodge. As well try to describe Grock's triumphal march around the Cirque Medranome in Paris—high-stepping, bow-sawing, Learesque. But Steinitz was real and solid and unromantic. His name stands for a heap of facts, not dreams. He was the first official Chess Champion of the World and from 1866 to 1894 was the outstanding master of the game. Yet he was human, and after he lost the Championship in 1894, he never again won a first prize in a tournament. It is true that he only lived another six years, but we may be permitted to imagine that his defeat undid him.

Steinitz Please, not Stodge

Steinitz was a profound and original thinker, who completely upset all previous ideas about chess. Many people have maintained that he spoilt it, and certainly the effects of his discoveries have been lasting and have, on the whole, slowed up the pace of the game. There are no more check-mates in 15 moves—at least not outside those casual circles in which you and I play. And, altho' the charge may be unjust, I, for one, have always regarded him as the father of the modern idea of playing for a draw. If he wasn't, he ought to have been; for he was the supreme bore of the Chessboard. Yet he won—over and over again, against all the brilliance and artistry of his opponents. He was Aesop's tortoise in a world of fabulous hares.

Until his coming, chess had been a swift, thrilling, often brilliant, series of combinations. The great players had thought nothing of throwing handfuls of pawns to their opponents. So much the less was there to block the ruthless rush of their rooks and bishops. An open board was their objective, and when it had been achieved, how they would cut and thrust!

An open board had no attractions for Steinitz. He aimed at a secure board and, afterwards, at the application of certain profound theories about the inherent weakness or strength of particular positions. As far as the game permitted he avoided creating what he defined as "strong points" for his opponent, or, if they had come into being, took pains to neutralise them; while he unobtrusively occupied his own strong points and waited for his enemy, whose mind was usually working along different lines, to create and offer him others. Proceeding thus, neutralising strong points on the one hand while entrenching his pieces in them on the other, blocking his opponents freedom while gradually increasing his own, he would insinuate his way across the board like a stifling creeper, gaining power by slow accretion, until his hapless victim was incapable of warding off the relatively adventurous coup-de-grace. Steinitz—Old Stodge? They can't, of course, have been the same person for, unless my instinct is wrong, old Stodge was a purely, a desperately, defensive player. He knew

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he was going to lose; yet somehow hoped that he wouldn't. A poor feeble hope, but sufficient to draw him mothlike to the board where his courage abruptly vanished—pop. Poor old Stodge! There he lies, dead from timidity.

Whereas Steinitz must have sat down to play knowing, with obstinate defiance, how unsporting, how irritating, how insufferable, his methods would be thought; but knowing too that the game, at its end, would almost certainly yield him a victim, tied tight with cords, ready for a well-placed tap on the temple. Inglorious, if you will, but, oh! so efficient!

Well, there's my picture, idly constructed, incapable of justification. No doubt I shall be put right—about Stodge by his creator, about Steinitz by a chess pundit. Nevertheless my brief, if inaccurate, sketch carries with it, if not a moral, at least a timely thought.

Steinitz was born in Prague, but he lived as a foreigner in London for 20 years and planned there many of his devastating victories. Stodge—John Henry Stodge, may we guess?—was born in England, at Abinger in Surrey. He was British to the bone; and a most lovable amateur.

Now at this present time there must be in London a mind, composite or single, that is guiding Britain's war policy, facing up to the plans and combinations of our powerful enemy. We outsiders watch, puzzled by the novel lines on which the struggle has been developing, and sometimes doubting if success can possibly be won with the weapons, economic and diplomatic, we have so far chiefly chosen for the fight. It may cheer us to switch our minds to Steinitz, and to his methods on another, though microcosmic, battlefield.

Is England, perhaps, attempting in the broad world what Steinitz did on his chessboard? I cannot answer; but I can, on the other hand, record a little chant that I hum to myself each morning as I walk to my bus.

“Steinitz, please—Not Stodge
No, No, No. Not Stodge.”

JANE AUSTIN

(Buried in Winchester Cathedral).

Let us go in, to the place of arches,
 To the speechless stones of many names,
 To the peace of God engraved with battles,
 The tip-toe paving and the high roof of dreams.

Here they are written, the dead of all the wars
 Beneath the tower of God, their flags above them,
 In whispering dusk, (who died under the stars)
 And a trick of light for their triple diadem.

And one woman's name keeps with them company,
 She who lived and worked in a small Hampshire town;
 On her, incongruously, incredulously
 The battle badges and the flags look down.

CARLA LANYON LANYON.

THE FOREIGNER IN THE ENGLISH
LANDSCAPE.

I am afraid he does not fit into it as inconspicuously as he would like. We English are very particular about smooth and unemphatic ease, both in speech and manners, and also in outward appearance, and the foreigner is apt to stand out unexpectedly against the hazy, billowy outlines of our landscape, like the stiff angular monkey-puzzle trees on Leith Hill, which always excite his admiration. Perhaps he feels they are kindred aliens?

Never have I walked with my foreign friends over the Common without hearing them burst into rapture at the first sight of those scratchy exotic oddities. "We only

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know them as leetle pot-plants on our window-sill, but this is magnificent ! The outline !—and your name for them !—the French would never have thought of : “ *le désespoir des singes*.” After this the talk naturally moves to the Lord of the Manor of long ago, an Original, who was fond of enforcing his will upon nature as well as upon human beings. Beside planting these trees he tried to naturalise kangaroos on Leith Hill Common, but fortunately he only succeeded with the monkey-puzzles.

Then Our Continental Friend asks for explanations about Manorial rights, and about the somewhat vague and uncertain rights of Commoners. So we plunge and splash through explanation after explanation. These again lead to misunderstandings which have to be cleared up by further explanation; it is like the unravelling of a twisted skein—a constant stopping to undo the knots, to work the thread back. In cases where Our Continental Friend's knowledge of English is of the rapid, superficial kind, founded exclusively on reading, and not on speaking or listening, our intercourse becomes very halting, till at last, in despair, we find ourselves foolishly repeating words, or even whole phrases, with a queer unnatural foreign accent, in the vague hope that as it sounds un-English, it may be more understandable to him. But usually this causes more polite bewilderment. If only O.C.F. would quietly listen to our instructive talk ! But by way of showing his appreciation he is apt to interrupt our discourse with quick jumps at conclusions, which are quite disconcerting; they are so unexpected, and often lead us into unforeseen ditches, out of which we have to scramble back on to safe ground, a little weary and mud-stained.

Or maybe, he will see the points, which we were stressing so carefully, with much greater quickness than we could have thought possible; he will then start making comparisons between our long-established institutions and sound ideas, and his own foreign views and experience, which somehow have a curiously dimming effect on our own brightness, and make us feel sure that we cannot have made our meaning quite clear to him.

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O.C.F.'s misunderstandings reach into wide and unexpected regions. One particular guest naturally longed for a quiet exploring ramble by himself after all these educative walks. Of course he got lost, and returned long after lunch; meanwhile the dishes were kept anxiously hovering between kitchen and diningroom. When all the apologies had been gone through, he tried to tell us where he had been. He remembered passing a factory. As we pride ourselves on being completely rural, we were surprised and enquired further, and found that he had mistaken the mellowed brick wall of Leith Hill Place stables with its small windows, for the stern outside wall of a factory. He also related how he had been plunging through boggy paths and copse-woods until he had lost all sense of direction. In one of the muddiest spots he met a woman clothed in the roughest tweeds and wearing the most un-Continental boots. She had understood his plight at once, and given him directions for finding the road; naturally he took her to be one of the gypsies he had heard about so much, and who were allowed to camp on the Common; he had put his hand into his pocket, fumbling for a tip, when something in the woman's eye warned him that this would not be acceptable, and he had hastily pulled out his handkerchief instead, to wipe his brow. After hearing his further description of the spot, we knew she was one of our aristocratic and somewhat unconventional neighbours.

The foreigners' clothes are just another misunderstanding of our ideals and of our climate. They will wear the thickest furs and coats well into the Spring months, and thus they gaily start to accompany us on our long brisk walk; we soon find we have to slacken our pace. Once inside the house they trustfully shed these heavy garments, for being used to their unhealthy "Calorifères", they always wear the thinnest clothes indoors;— the results are shivering fits in the evening, followed by the lighting of unseasonable fires.

"They are really very nice people, considering they are foreigners". Of course this was said a long time ago,

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and we are sure we know and feel better nowadays. We like being polite and considerate, but perhaps it would be worth while to add just that touch of imagination to our polite consideration, which would lead us to look at our countryside through the eyes of O.C.F. and see it afresh, as if we had never seen it before. It is an experience that works like a magic spell, and to our surprise, we may even find ourselves, not merely mispronouncing our English, but talking fluently with the foreigner in his own language.

ELIZABETH TREVELYAN.

IT WOULD BE JOYOUS.

It would be joyous so to train
limb and body,
that they could serve love's constant gain
with vigour steady;

obedient to each call approved
by mind and heart,
of service to each friend beloved,
near or apart.

And so to do till body fail—
As fail it must :
till then, to use this metal frail,
nor let it rust.

Nursing its curious strength, oft spent,
lest heart grow tired;
guarding the flame, by body lent,
when thoughts are fired.

Until God give another way
to live and move,
when death has taken this away
which now serves love.

S.S.

THE BROAD AND NARROW PATH

(A True Story).

Our parents were possibly agnostics, though certainly not atheists. At any rate, they did not go to Church or Chapel. This was so terrible a sin in the eyes of Doris, the village girl whose duty it was to take the two youngest of us for walks, that the horror of it led her to a deep and passionate zeal to save us tender saplings from the fate of the full-grown trees, who would certainly be consumed by the fire of judgement at the first touch of death. We soon became infected by her horror; and so our conversion commenced. It began secretly but ended, as will appear, in a blaze of glaring, inglorious publicity.

Our conversion led not only to our learning the Lord's Prayer, which we repeated clandestinely, kneeling at our bedside, when there was no danger of a parent witnessing such a scene, but to becoming secret watchers over the peaceful lives of Father and Mother. Gradually, under skilled tuition, we convinced ourselves that, overlaid by the disguise of sweetness and tolerance, there lay hidden a lust for drink, gambling, and all the evils conventionally associated with those who tread the Broad Path of a godless life. Our concern for them was real, but we became shifty, lying, though not unhappy children. We felt "good", and savoured the bouyancy of religious fervour that comes to those who have seen the Light.

The time came when we felt we had outgrown the teaching Doris could offer. We decided to go to Sunday School. To throw our parents off their guard needed skilful, underhand plotting. Although we thought it socially correct to follow the Narrow Path, we had no scruples about deceiving our gentle parents—lying deeply if need be.

After Sunday dinner we announced, with a nonchalant air, that we were going for a walk to the Fishponds. Suspiciously tidy and clean we started off in the direction of the Fishponds, although they were at the opposite end of the village to the Church. Out of sight of the house,

The Broad and Narrow Path

we doubled back by a circuitous route and soon tagged on to the village children. Once inside the Church—we had never been inside it before—our confidence dwindled, and evaporated entirely when the gaunt form of the Sunday School teacher approached and, amid the hushed silence of the village children, asked our names. The register was read and we, like the others, said "Present" when our names were called at the end of the list.

My emotions and what it was we listened to have long since passed from my mind. On our return we told a glowing tale of all the excitements we had had around the Fishponds. Our deception must have been pitifully obvious, but nothing except interest in our story was shown.

Every Sunday, for a whole year, we repeated our shameless adventure; each Sunday we were duly registered as "Present" at the School.

The high-light in the village social calendar was the Church Fête, held in the vicarage garden. Everyone went, and our family was no exception. Who is there who can resist a flower and vegetable show, the sound of a brass band playing on a hot August afternoon, and tea at a little table set under the chestnut trees?

After appreciating the giant marrows, tight bunches of wild flowers, eggs and honey arranged in the faintly green light of the hired marquee, we ambled, with the rest, to the *pièce de résistance* of the afternoon—the prize-giving.

Wedged tightly between gently perspiring bodies, my brother, Mother and I awaited the coming of the Vicar. Behind a trestle table, draped with the Union Jack and laden with intriguing-looking prizes, the Vicar, amid decorous applause, delivered himself of a few appropriate remarks. Lifting a large and wondrous doll, he said "Before distributing the prizes for the sports and flower show, it is, as you know, our custom to remember those dear children of my flock who, by their devotion to the teaching of Christ, attended Sunday School with the greatest regularity during the past year. This beautiful doll is awarded to Marjory Gill, for she it was who . . .". I waited no longer. With a tragic last glance at the doll

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I dived beneath the legs of the friendly milkman and ran and ran and ran, only stopping when my legs and breath could do no more.

To meet my Mother seemed an impossibility; deceit and lying could no longer save me. But the milk of human kindness and true religion prevailed. The episode was over. My parents, sensing our abject misery and humiliation, understandingly refrained from pointing the moral.

MARJORY ALLEN.

APRIL.

When April comes she is so fair,
 What wonder poets court her?
 There's sweetness in the very air
 When April comes! She is so fair,
 Her smiles and tears in equal share
 She gives as Nature taught her;
 When April comes she is so fair,
 What wonder poets court her?

Young April comes with lightsome tread
 Along the valleys singing,
 By laughter-loving breezes led,
 Young April comes. With lightsome tread
 She hastes her joyous news to spread,
 Till all the woodland's ringing;
 Young April comes with lightsome tread
 Along the valleys singing.

G. M. HUDSON,

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