

JUDGMENT.

(Continued from Page 5.)

tip as though he were greatly interested in it.

"Wouldn't the amount of the salary offered make any difference?" he asked casually.

"I think not," said the detective coldly.

"Suppose I offered you five thousand pounds a year and paid the first two years salary in advance?" suggested the millionaire quietly.

The little detective, well-trained as he was to control his feelings, could not altogether hide the effect upon him of this extraordinary suggestion.

He gave a little jump in his chair, and something like a gasp of astonishment escaped him.

"You—you are serious?" he said unsteadily.

"Quite."

"That is a firm offer?"

"Absolutely."

Mr Pelham Webb drew a deep breath. "If I accept your offer, I shall have to drop this case," he said.

"Naturally. I could not share you with anyone else, I should want your exclusive services."

"I see," began the detective slowly. "I—er—I am afraid—"

"Think it over," interrupted Beaumont Chase, rising to his feet. "I can give you half an hour. Take a stroll by yourself in the grounds. I can put you on to a number of very curious cases—cases that have been worrying me for years. You won't be idle if you decide to come to me. But don't decide in a hurry—think it over. Meet me here in half an hour."

As he spoke, he linked his arm in the little man's and led him into one of the windows opening on to the terrace.

Before he quite knew what was happening, Mr Pelham Webb found himself out in the beautiful grounds of Beaumont Hall, alone.

Beaumont Chase slowly retraced his steps across the room until he came to the conservatory.

On the threshold he paused and seemed to be thinking.

His handsome face wore a very grave expression.

And while he waited, Kitty suddenly emerged from her hiding place and confronted him.

Her cheeks were flushed and her eyes were very bright, and to the man it seemed that never had she looked more beautiful.

"You heard all?" he asked.

"Every word!" she replied eagerly. "Oh, Mr Chase, how splendid you are! How generous! You will give this horrid little man all that money and—and Dick will escape."

"It is a large sum of money," Beaumont Chase uttered the words quietly and thoughtfully, and a startled look came into the girl's eyes.

A sudden fear seized her and all the colour faded from her cheeks.

"But you will give it to him!" she exclaimed eagerly. "You will not draw back now! You will not let him take Dick, You will give him the money!"

The man's calm gaze was fixed on the girl's excited face.

"I have never in my life given anything away," he said quietly.

Kitty stared at him, her lips parted.

"But I have bought many things," he went on; "and whenever I wanted a thing I have always been ready to pay the price of it."

"And you want to save Dick!" cried Kitty eagerly.

"No; I don't think so! Why should I take any interest in the young man?"

Kitty gasped. She was terrified and bewildered. If this man did not mean to help her, why was he playing with her in this fashion? What did he mean?

Desperately she determined to come to an explanation.

"You are rich," she said impetuously. "This money is nothing to you. You have it in your power to save an innocent man from a cruel fate. After all your kindness, I will not believe you intend to betray him to his enemies. Why do you torture me? How can you be so cruel?"

"Have you forgotten what I told you, Miss Millbank?" said the man, remaining perfectly calm and unruffled. "If Foster is to be saved, you must help. It cannot be done by me alone. You must do your part."

"I will do anything!" cried Kitty impulsively.

"Very well, then; I think it can be managed. In the first place, you must return to your father's house at once. Do you consent to that?"

"Yes, yes; I will go back!"

"He is very ill and he needs you. Your place is by his side. He is so ill that he has not yet been informed of your absence. If you go back to-day, he need never know of your—er—your escapade."

"I will go back," said Kitty nervously; "I only want your promise that you will protect Dick."

"I will promise that. I will undertake to get him safely out of the country. I will so arrange that he disappears completely, leaving no trace behind. In another country under another name he can begin life afresh."

"Oh sir! how can I thank you! How—" The man raised his hand and checked her impetuous flow of gratitude.

"One minute! I will do all that, but I must make myself secure. There is a condition attached to my promise—a condition, which you must agree to—otherwise I can do nothing, the law must take its course, and Foster will be arrested and compelled to complete his sentence."

"What is your condition?" said Kitty. And fear was in her heart though she knew not why.

"You will make no attempt to follow or communicate with Foster," said Chase. The girl nodded.

"I agree," she said in a low voice.

"For a whole year you will hear nothing. At the end of that period the hue and cry after Foster will have died down and you will know that he is safe. I shall bring you proof of it."

"Yes?"

"Then will be the danger for me. You will want to follow him. That will put the police again on his track, and my complicity in the affair will come to light, with results extremely disagreeable to me."

"I promise you have nothing to fear. If you will only save Dick, I—I promise never to see him again!" cried poor Kitty pitifully the hot tears rushing to her eyes.

"Pardon me, that is not enough. At the end of the year, when you know Foster is doing well and has gone out of your life for ever, I shall introduce you, in your father's house, to a gentleman of your own class, possessed of ample means and in every way eligible. Will you consent to marry him?"

The amazing proposal, so carefully led up to, was out at last.

The millionaire spoke calmly and deliberately. There was something almost cold and business-like in his tone and manner, and it was behind an impenetrable mask that he concealed his real feelings.

Kitty fell back as though she had received an actual blow and stared open-eyed and open-mouthed at the speaker.

"Marry? Marry someone I don't know? You can't be serious, I—I shall never marry."

"Then I can do nothing for you," replied the man quietly. "I regret it, but I have thought this matter out very seriously. And I can see no other way. If I agree to save young Foster, you must consent to marry the man I choose for you in a year's time from to-day. That is my final condition. Please say yes or no."

White to the lips the girl stared at him, scarcely believing her ears.

But it did not take her long to become convinced that the terrible man before her was absolutely serious. As she gazed at him, a great horror took possession of her soul.

A moment ago she had told herself that she was prepared to make any sacrifice to save Dick. But she had never dreamed of this.

She loved Dick Foster with all the passionate ardour of a young girl's first love, and her whole being revolted at the thought of giving herself to any other man.

Her first impulse was to fling herself upon her knees and beg for mercy, but the cold, resolute look in the man's eyes restrained her.

Then she thought of Dick as a hunted man. With her mind's eye she saw him seized and dragged back to a prison cell. She saw him in a convict's garb, condemned for long years to wear out a cruel existence under the soul-deadening tortures inflicted upon him by coarse and brutal warders.

She could save him from that! She, and she alone! But the price!

She shivered with a sickening sense of horror and disgust, and when she tried to speak no words would come.

A slight sound at the other end of the room startled her and broke the almost unendurable tension.

She glanced in the direction and saw that one of the big French windows was opening and that a man was about to enter.

It was Pelham Webb!

The half-hour was up and the detective was returning for his answer.

On perceiving that Beaumont Chase was not alone, the little man was about to withdraw, but the millionaire beckoned him to enter.

"Come in, Mr Webb," he said easily.

"This is the young lady you are in search of. You will be glad to hear she has decided to return to her father's house to-day."

(Continued on Page 10.)

DRAUGHTS.

(Conducted By F. Hutchins.)

The annual meeting of the Laverca-gill Draughts Club will be held in the Athenaeum smoke-room at 7.30 p.m., on Wednesday, 28th April. A revival in the game is anticipated and it is intended to start a tourney next month. A good attendance is required and newcomers will be very welcome. Come along and make the coming season a success.

At the smoke concert tendered to the visiting players at the Timaru Draughts tournament a remarkably able speech was given by Mr Patterson in reply to the toast "chess and kindred games." Mr Patterson is a chess player and he said, He would not attempt to say which game was the best. Both games would exercise the intellectual faculties to the full extent of their powers. None of us could become perfect at either game. They both tended to correct thinking and could be taught in the schools with great benefit. They would assist to develop the perceptive faculties and he ventured to say that if our legislators had received a training in chess or draughts our laws would be better. The same faculties that helped us to solve chess and draught problems would help us to solve our social problems.

In conclusion he told a humorous little story of two old Scotchmen who used to meet regularly for a tussle over the draught board. One of them died and the other one seemed very much cut-up about it. He was wandering round one day looking very down-hearted, when a friend met him and tried to cheer him up. He told him that as death was inevitable to all of us sooner or later, it was foolish of him to grieve too much for poor Jock. "It isn't that," said Sandy, "but the devil was a game up on me."

Solution of Problem 4.

Black: 7. Kings on 19 and 28.
White: 16. Kings on 6 and 12.

White to play and draw.

6.9A 28.24 9.14 24.20 16.11
7.16 14.18 Drawn.

A.—If White plays 6.2, Black wins by 28.24, 2.11, 24.20.

Another early trap in the Bristol although old is worth remembering. It is brought about by the following play—

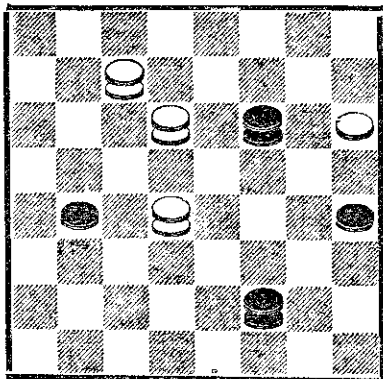
11.16 12.19 4.8 12.19 8.12 9.18
24.20 22.18 23.16 27.23 21.17 26.23
16.19 8.11 8.12 3.8A 12.19 18.27
23.16 27.23 32.27 23.16 18.14

White wins.

A.—11.16, 20.11, 7.16, 18.15, 16.20, 23.16, 10.19, etc draws.

The following is an end game played in the championship tourney between Boreham and Calderwood.

Boreham: White, 21, Kings 15, 23 and 27.



Calderwood: Black, 13, 16, Kings, 6 and 22.

White to play.

Boreham 23.18 and Calderwood drew by 6.10, some of us thought that Boreham should have won. I submit the following play to win.

15.11 16.20 11.15 6.1 23.18
22.26 15.19 26.30A 27.23 1.5
18.22 5.1 23.18 1.5 21.17
5.1 17.14 1.5 14.10 5.1
18.14, White wins.

A.—26.31 27.23 1.5 18.22 5.1
21.17 1.5 17.14 5.1 14.9
1.5 22.18 5.14 18.9 13.17
9.14 17.22 14.18 22.25 18.15
25.30 23.27 31.24 19.28 and White wins.

This does not exhaust the play on it and I invite criticism.

ORIGINAL.

AHMET.

A True Story of Life with the N.Z. Division in Egypt.

(By 11/1275.)

MAHMOUD STARTS FOR MECCA.

CHAPTER V.

Abu Sulieman, professedly to prove his sanctity, but in reality to avoid the vengeance of Mahmoud, set out on his pilgrimage to the Kebra at Mecca.

At least that was what he gave out in the bazaars but the sly old ruffian had in reality been the whole time in the pay of the Turks, and from information he had acquired during the time he had been attached to the forces as interpreter, he knew that there was the probability of an attack by the Turks on the Suez Canal. From his Turkish masters he also knew that such attack was more imminent than was dreamed of by the British intelligence department. Thus he thought to cross the canal at Kantara, and by striking south-east towards Rodhsalem to get in touch with the advancing Turks, and hand over to them his latest information as to the strength and disposition of the British forces.

To this end he proceeded to Salhieh by train, and stayed for three days with a kinsman, who procured him a camel, and obtained a quantity of provisions and dhourra (camel food) in readiness for the journey across the desert.

Then on the fourth night, accompanied by his kinsman, Abu Sulieman started at sunset for Kantara, taking care to avoid the signal and pilot stations and the railway station with its guard of Sikh soldiers. To the north of the pilot station they found a dahabea the crew of which for a small consideration set Abu Sulieman and his camel across the canal, his kinsman returning to Salhieh. Abu, after returning thanks to Allah for bringing him so far on his journey, set the nose of his camel south-east and started for Rodhsalem.

During this time Mahmoud had been by no means idle. Starting the day after Abu Sulieman, he followed the latter to Salhieh, having found out the old man's movements, through the good offices of some of his brother moghassils, for as says the proverb, "What shall be hid from the washers of the dead? Shall not they know the going and the coming of all men?"

Sitting then in a corner of the Sok at Salhieh, drinking coffee, and pretending to be overcome with the fumes of hashish, he heard the kinsman of Abu Sulieman strike the bargain for Abu's camel.

Now Mahmoud, although ignorant of modern geography, possessed what was common to all Arabs, a highly developed sense of direction, and he was well aware that the land route to Mecca did not run past Rodhsalem, but he also knew that there was a Turkish post there, also he had heard the bazaar rumours as to a large army concentrating there to attack the Canal.

Thus, when Abu Sulieman and his kinsman started for Kantara Mahmoud followed them, keeping to the sleepers of the military railway.

Abu's kinsman Ibrahim was returning to Salhieh, when his camel stopped dead beside a palm tree, after crossing the fresh-water canal. There was a graces rope across the track about breast high, which had checked the beast, and on dismounting to remove the obstruction, Ibrahim felt a sharp pain in the back. He rolled over with a gasp and Mahmoud to moghassil arose wiping a long and particularly nasty-looking knife, which, after carefully wiping, he placed in his belt. He next heaved the body of the victim into the canal and removing the rope from across the track, he mounted the camel and, turning south, made off in the direction of Ismailia.

The next morning, shortly after day-break, he was at the British Commandant's office, with the news that a spy by name of Abu Sulieman was crossing the desert to Rodhsalem.

Little time was lost in communicating with headquarters in Cairo, whence it was found that an interpreter named Abu Sulieman was missing from his usual haunts, and a patrol of the "Bikanir Camel Corps" was sent across the desert in the direction of Rodhsalem with orders to intercept the spy if possible.

The patrol was absent for three days, during which time Mahmoud was kept in

custody. On the return of the patrol the Officer in Command reported that he had obtained touch with the Turkish advance guard some thirty kilos east of Rodhsalem, that they were too strong for him to push back in order to see what force lay behind, and that he had made all speed back to report. He had seen no signs of Abu Sulieman, although two of his men had followed a camel track back and found that it started from the north of Kantara, and was fairly fresh, and that as the tracks led toward the Turkish force he had little doubt that the story told by Mahmoud was true and that the spy had succeeded in reaching the enemy.

An aeroplane was sent out to reconnoitre, and reported a strong Turkish force moving rapidly towards the canal, evidently with the intention of cutting it near Serapeum.

At once all was orderly bustle and confusion. In a few hours troops arrived by trains from Suez, Alexandria, and Cairo and were moved to the threatened zone. Before daybreak of the next day they were dug in on the west bank of the canal.

All this time on her, Ahmet, had been with the Umpteenth Aussies, and each day had made him more familiar with military life until with the easy adaptability of the young he was to all intents and purposes quite what he called a "dean-koom soger."

At last Ahmet asked when the sham fight would begin, and they laughed and said that it was a real fight this time, and that it was a dinkum war, and not at all a bad old war after all.

Then the regiments began to march away, Tommies, New Zealanders, and Aussies, Scotties with their kilts and swart Ghurkas with their kookries at their sides. At last the Umpteenth moved off, and Ahmet in the confusion managed to secret himself on the train. It is quite true that no one had given him permission to go, but then no one had given him a thought, or he would certainly have been left behind.

He was cunning enough to keep hidden till the troops detrained at Serapeum, when he slipped off in the darkness, and waited till daylight to join his company.

The next morning he made his way to the canal and reported that Sergt. Mackenzie had rejoined. The "skipper" had no means of sending him back to Helmeih, and was too busy to worry about him, and after rating him for coming without permission, sent him to the company cook to get some food.

The men were at breakfast when Ahmet arrived, and were delighted to find that their mascot had followed them. Ahmet had the time of his life, also the feed of his life, for all sorts of dainties were pressed upon him.

His company, being in reserve, did not take part in the ensuing fight and the men expressed their disapproval of this fact in a manner that taught Ahmet a variety of words, which he added with great gusto to his already large vocabulary. The language was particularly lurid when broken and defeated the Turkish Army had retired, and they were ordered to form the burial parties. Ahmet accompanied them on this duty, and wondering over the scene of the fight, he found a wounded man whose face seemed oddly familiar to him.

He, of course, knew nothing of the other's treachery and was surprised, and not a little puzzled as to how Abu came to be there. He ran to the captain of his company and told him that Abu Sulieman the Haj and interpreter was lying greatly hurt. The Captain who had by no means the same respect for Abu at once ordered that he should be placed under a guard and his capture reported to Headquarters.

Abu was removed in an ambulance drawn by two mules and driven by a native driver, whose face was muffled. Ahmet, who was there to see the old man off peered into the face of the driver, wondering who it could be and why the man had his face muffled. Imagine his astonishment when as the cart moved off the driver let fall his muffer and disclosed the features of Mahmoud, the moghassil, his own father.