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Lyon, July 18th 2008
(translation finished on July 26th)

Dear Mr MOLL,

We are back from our international chess tournament which took place in Barcelona and since, daily work has already caught us up!

Anyway thanks for the 2 emails (5th and 6th of July 2008) that you sent us and the article you published on July 13th about the mysterious chess game of Lewis CARROLL http://www.chessvibes.com/odd/lang_enlewis-carrolls-chess-problemlang_en because it opens a true debate which will become exciting for all Carroll-fans and people who have been following our actions for several years ...

You often described our project as « a joke or a parody ».

Actually, keeping our good mood (like in wonderland) turned out to be our main asset in front of such a task we had to deal with : first understanding, and then explaining this mysterious chess game to the public. This did not keep us from doing our best to reach the truth in an accurate way.

Here are our main answers and questions in return.

1) We would like to know your address in order to send you the book Alice et le maître d'échecs which is a 176-pages-book and seems to be necessary to understand better the process to reach our discoveries on the chess game. (though not translated in English yet).

2) You ask for proofs. You wonder about the fact that CARROLL didn't write anything on the subject. But this chess game is, by itself, a deep and startling letter written by Lewis CARROLL! Almost every move is a proof.

It necessarily recalls his famous lost diaries and especially the one in which pages were cut by razor by his niece: pages of June 25th 1865 and after.

Did you feel all the irony in the preface by CARROLL of 1896?

The link in English: <http://www.echecs-histoire-litterature.com/eng/preface.doc>

Initially, Lewis CARROLL wanted to give as few hints as possible, but 25 years later, facing several misinterpretations, he felt compelled to let some clues in this preface! This is very important and there he stresses moves 6 and 7 ...

3) Do you agree that Lewis CARROLL was very concerned about details? And that he likely did very few things without having something in mind in his whole writings and life? If you agree, did you play all the moves of his chess game on a chessboard? Not to play seriously this chess game

because of its strangeness is the mistake which has been made by plenty of chessplayers for 137 years ...

You know that the white Pawn is Alice since Lewis CARROLL wrote it. Therefore, if one wants to give a sense to all that, who are the other pieces? Why do they move this way? Etc. These questions led Christophe LEROY to search for the sense of this chess game.

4) Did you notice that almost every move of CARROLL contains an annotation? And that several of them remind his life and his relationship with Alice (by railway, shop, river)? Do you find normal that these moves make no sense? In any case it is what took us aback, excited, bewitched and kept us awake!

We came to the conclusion that there are far too much troubling coincidences.

The theory of CARROLL's proposal to Alice (addressed to the LIDDELL family) is the conclusion of the thoughts ... This theory and the eviction of CARROLL in June 1865 simply allows us to free ourselves and to conclude.

If somebody has another conclusion, it's not a problem for us and it would even please us because we know that our thoughts so far are very, very close to the reality ... The proposal of marriage is only a conclusion. It doesn't throw back into question our discoveries on the 42, the eviction of the 2 Knights moves 6 and 7, Pieces watching themselves and looking like the relationship which existed between the LIDDELL family and Lewis CARROLL ...

5) Do you know WAKELING's article on the 42? It helps a lot to understand the attachment and symbolic of Lewis CARROLL for the 42 (let us quote the 42 illustrations of the book, an example among many others).

You were surprised when we spoke about the number 42 and its divisors. We did it to explain quickly to the readers that there was a high symbolic around this number for Lewis CARROLL. Like you, we don't believe in esotericism and all number coincidences (the meeting at 24, the death 42 years later, etc).

Simply we searched for the presence of the 42 in the chess game, like others did directly in the work or other favorite fields of Lewis CARROLL.

How can it be chance that:

- the game is presented in 2 columns of 10 and 11 half-moves ($2 \times (10+11) = 42$)
- the game contains 14 white moves and 3 red moves ($3 \times 14 = 42$)
- the sum of numbers of moves from the beginning of the game to 6.Ne7+ included is $1+1+2+2+3+3+4+4+5+5+6+6 = 42$, again, and precisely between moves 6 and 7, again, moves especially underlined by the author in the preface of 1896 ... Moves where the 2 Knights fight for Alice, on the adjacent square ... And why this mysterious return of the Knight in f5?

6) Did you notice that the red Knight and Alice meet again off the board, and that it means the end of the adult-child relationship between Alice and Charles and it is at that time that the sum of all pieces of the game reaches 42 points, sum which can not be a coincidence.

Among all other 42 we found, it's almost sure that most of them are not here by chance. It's not esotericism but codes deliberately let, codes leading to a message one had to discover.

(It is following these elements that Mark RICHARDS of the Lewis CARROLL Society of London began listening to us).

A chessplayer doesn't play randomly and generally searches for the right move. Lewis CARROLL (who was already in line with this behaviour in his life) didn't act differently and didn't set randomly the moves of this game ...

7) We could send you whole pages of explanations on the game move by move (if only we had translated them) but here are some hints to start with. While playing the game, did you notice that

the white Rook is always observed by the white Queen? And that both Knights are always watched by the white Queen? That the Kings are in opposition? Etc.

The 2 Knights are the messengers of the red King. Do you remember how the book ends: « Who was the red King? »? The story doesn't end like this by chance, it's a new clue let by the author.

You can train some time with the help of this small module of play (of work) we made in May 2007:

The link in English: http://www.echecs-histoire-litterature.com/eng/module1_en.doc

8) You seem to challenge what is written in history books about Charles L. DODGSON. It reminds us KASPAROV saying that an important part of the History was simply invented. It's another debate and we won't enter in it.

9) The website was created in February 2007 whereas the book was written in December 2008 and published in March. Therefore the website was not created in order to promote the book: but to promote CARROLL and chess, obviously! By the way we have to say that Mr LEROY was not very enthusiastic about writing this book, because of the time it required and the meaningless financial returns. We did it for the pleasure, for the fans and to let a literary record. The construction of the giant chessboard of mirrors did not make money and, on the contrary, resulted in a deficit. (Private money + Individuals gifts). Here again these actions were led by a few enthusiasts, some of whom finally invested hundreds or even thousands euros in this adventure or spent hours and hours for pleasure!

10) About the symbolic concerning hidden letters and the moves of the pieces:

- Pawn = Alice.
- Knights move in L to Alice : L like Lewis, Love and the Pawn Alice LIDDELL.
- C like Church, CARROLL, Charles.
- V = Victoria.
- Check (+) of the red Knight to «get » the Pawn Alice (Knights' fight).
- + = Christ's Cross, religious sign and the sign of the Deacon.

6 Alice moves to **d7** (*forest*)

6 ♖e7+ - The red Knight moves to e7 (*check*)

7 ♗xe7 - White Knight takes red Knight

7 ♗f5 - The white Knight moves to f5

We understand that it's difficult for one to get an idea as long as one does not really break inside the game itself and Lewis CARROLL's intentions. Christophe did not believe in the theory of the proposal before playing the game in a friendly theater play during which some elements appeared to him. Believe it or not.

It's useless to dream up during hours (or to discuss): one has to play the game, to intend to enter in the author's world and to decode messages, but above all to play it. It's the debate between those who study a thing and those who live it, between those who are in the theory and those who are faced with the practice, which is of course an ancestral problematic.

11) About the indications of the 32 pieces by CARROLL in the early editions, we were aware of it and we think that it is actually a decoy! The author did that because he really wanted to make the problem mysterious. Apparently, he thought of it as a mistake (and deemed the problem complicated enough as it was!), and he removed it in the 1896's edition.

Finally we have to apologize for the quality of our English.

We thank you again for your actions and criticisms.

Best regards,
Christophe LEROY
Sylvain RAVOT