

« Alice and the Chess master » in Domaine of Lacroix-Laval

... Information on : <http://www.echecs-histoire-litterature.com>
and on : <http://www.echecs-histoire-litterature.com>



► « Tea party » at 16.00

Solution of the chess game of « Through the looking glass » the 3rd Sunday of each month, June 17th, July 15th, August 19th and September 16th, followed by a tasting of frozen tea

Free access. Appointment in castle's gardens.

► For the public, from 7 to 77 year « Alice's chess game »

5 wednesday from 17.00 to 18.00 (May 23th ; June 13th and 27th ; July 11th and 27th). Appointment at 17.00 behing the castle (enter of the museum).

► Philatelic memories, stamps and seal 1st day "Alice and the chess master"

Friday June 8th from 14.00 to 17.00

Appointment behing the castle (enter of the museum).

Information « reservation reception » : Karine SERAFIN : 04 78 87 65 65.

► Without forgetting « Rhône Vacances » animations from July

9th to 27th from Monday to Friday from 15.00 to 18.00.

Contact Comité Rhône Echecs : 06 10 60 60 75

Chess diagram which inspired a part of the project "Garden and wonders : Alice's mirror" and which is reproduced by the chess-board of mirrors in front of the castle of Lacroix-Laval.

... and which is before the story in « Through the looking glass and what Alice found there » (London, 1871, 2nd part of the adventures of Alice in Wonderland)

Son of a minister, english author and deacon Charles Lutwidge DODGSON (1832-1898), *alias* Lewis CARROLL, was mathematics teacher in Oxford (Christ Church College) at XIX^{ème} century.

We can specify :

- his mathematical genius,
- his love of figures of which a preponderance of the number 42, that we can find in all his work.
- his mastery of symbolic logic,
- his artistical sense very developed, both in theatre and drawing,
- his photographic works which, for some photos, are some of the most successful of the XIXth century.

He has written more than 98,000 letters during his life : in particular, his letters to his "child friends" while collaborating in literary and mathematics reviews.

We can underline that he was the inventor of several objects ; not forgetting his excellent physical condition : each week, on the same day, he did approximately 20 miles of walking !

« Here is a Man ! », like Napoléon BONAPARTE could have said, if he had known him.

During a boat walk, July 4th 1862, the author was captivated by the personality of Alice LIDDELL, one of the girls of the senior class of Christ Church College. She inspired in him the imaginary world of Alice, the success of which at this time was almost like that of the Bible ! The 2nd part of Alice "Through the looking glass and what Alice found there" was published in 1871 when Alice was 19.

Chess impassioned, Lewis CARROLL wrote this in his private diaries. He explains that he noted down his games with his brothers, sisters and aunts, and even explains an excursion to London to see a chess match (August 1866).

It must be the match between the two best players at this time: ANDERSSSEN and STEINITZ. They played in 3 London clubs (Westminster, the London Chess Club and the Saint Georges's), a match which ended in victory to Steinitz by 8 to 6. STEINITZ became the first world chess champion in 1886.

Finally we have learnt that in his library there was the following books :

- The Art of Chess-Play : A new treatise on the Game of Chess (George Walker - 1846.)
- The Chess-Player's Companion : Comprising a new treatise on Odds, and a collection of games (Howard Staunton - 1849)
- The chess tournament, a collection of the games played at this celebrated assemblage (namely at the St. George's Club to mark the Great Exhibition - Howard Staunton - 1852)

Written from 1869 to January 1871, "Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There" is conceived like a continuation of the adventures of "Alice in Wonderland"

After having tried to learn chess to his small cat, Alice decides to go through the looking glass. Here she does a strange travel in a land conceived like a chessboard, meeting many astonishing animals and extraordinary characters.

Among them, a chess king who is happy that she couldn't see anyone at this distance and a queen who promises jam for each following day. After a lot of adventures, Alice arrives on the 8th square of the board and so becomes a queen, like the promoted pawn in the true chess game. Then she chairs a sumptuous and feiric banquet.

There was a lot of specialists studies in order to know if yes or no Alice's course was built like a game or a problem of chess. In the idea that we have of a chess course, this seems obvious. But in the true chess rules (white move several moves in a row, the white King is in check during 2 moves !), liberties taken by Lewis CARROLL are too high to read finally in 1st degree the chess game.

Extract : For some minutes Alice stood without speaking, looking out in all directions over the country - and a most curious country it was. There were a number of tiny little brooks running straight across it from side to side, and the ground between was divided up into squares by a number of a little green hedges, that reached from brook to brook.

"I declare it's marked out just like a large chess-board !"
Alice said at last. "There ought to be some men moving about somewhere and so there are !"
she added in a tone of delight, and her heart began to beat quick with excitement as she went on. "It's a great huge game of chess that's being played - all over the world - if this is the world at all, you know. Oh, what fun it is ! How i wish i was one of them ! I wouldn't mind being a Pawn, if only I might join-though of course I should like to be a Queen, best."

She glanced rather shyly at the real Queen as she said this, but her companion only smiled pleasantly, and said "That's easily managed. You can be the White Queen's pawn, if you like, as Lily's too young to play : and you're in the Second Square to begin with : wen you get to the Eighth Square you'll be a Queen" Just at this moment, somehow or other, they began to run.

The last message (coded !) of Lewis CARROLL.

Domaine de Lacroix-Laval, May 10th 2007

Here is the last message (coded !) that Lewis CARROLL did address in December 1896 to the chess players and his readers of the book "Through the looking glass and what Alice found there" which is the sequel of Alice in wonderland.

Preface to 1896 edition

As the chess-problem, given on the previous page, has puzzled some of my readers, it may be well to explain that it is correctly worked out, so far as the *moves* are concerned. The *alternation* of Red and White is perhaps not so strictly observed as it might be, and the "castling" of the three Queens is merely a way of saying that they entered the palace; but the "check" of the White King at move 6, the capture of the Red Knight at move 7, and the final "checkmate" of the Red King, will be found, by any one who will take the trouble to set the pieces and play the moves as directed, to be strictly in accordance with the laws of the game.

The new words, in the poem "Jabberwocky", have given rise to some differences of opinion as to their pronunciation: so it may be well to give instructions on *that* point also. Pronounce "slithy" as if it were the two words "sly, the": make the "g" *hard* in "gyre" and "gimble" : and pronounce "rath" to rhyme with "bath".

For this sixty-first thousand, fresh electropes have been taken from the wood-blocks (witch, never having been used for printing from, are in as good condition as when first cut in 1871), and the whole book has been set up afresh with new type. If the artistic qualities of this reissue fall short, in any particular, of those possessed by the original issue, it will not be for want of painstaking on the part of author, publisher, or printer.

I take this opportunity of announcing that the Nursery "Alice", hitherto priced at four shillings, net, is now to be had on the same terms as the ordinary shilling pictures books – although I feel sure that it is, in every quality (except the *text* itself, in which I am not qualified to pronounce), greatly superior to them. Four shillings was a perfectly reasonable price to charge, considering the very heavy initial outlay I had incurred : still, as the Public have practically said, "We will *not* give more than a shilling for a picture-book, however artistically got-up, "I am content to reckon my outlay on the book as so much dead loss, and, rather than let the little ones, for whom it was written, go without it, I am selling it at a price which is, to me, much the same thing as *giving* it away.

Christmas, 1896
Lewis CARROLL

And here is the diagram which is before the story with this text :
The white pawn (Alice) plays and wins in 11 moves



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|--|---|
| 1 Alice meets red Queen | 1 ♛h5 – The red Queen moves to h5 |
| 2 Alice through d3 (by railway) moves to d4 (Tweedledum et Tweedledee) | 2 ♛c4 - The white Queen (after shawl) moves to c4 |
| 3 Alice meets white Queen (with shawl) | 3 ♛c5 (the white Queen becomes sheep) |
| 4 Alice moves to d5 (shop, river, shop) | 4 ♛f8 (the white Queen leaves egg on shelf) |
| 5 Alice moves to d6 (Humpty Dumpty) | 5 ♛c8 (flying from the red Knight) |
| 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 |
| 8 Alice moves to d8 (coronation) | 8 ♛e8 - Red Queen moves to e8 (examination) |
| 9 Alice becomes Queen | 9 Queens castle |
| 10 Alice castles (feast) | 10 ♛a6 (soup) |
| 11 Alice takes red Queen, and wins. ♛xe8 checkmate. | |

