

The Murders in the Rue Francon Dues Chorque.

By Edward A. Poe.

It is not improbable that a few farther steps in physiological science will lead to a belief in the existence, if not to the actual discovery and location of an organ of analysis. If this power (which may be described, although not defined, as the capacity for resolving thought into its elements) be not, in fact, an essential portion of what late philosophers term ideality, then there are indeed many good reasons for supposing it a primitive faculty. That it may be a constituent of ideality is here suggested in opposition to the vulgar dictum (founded upon the assumptions of grave authority, however) that the calculating and discriminating powers (causality and comparison) are at variance with the imaginative - that the three, in short, can hardly coexist. But, although thus opposed to received opinion, the idea will not appear ill-founded when we observe that the processes of invention or creation are strictly akin with the processes of resolution - the former being nearly, if not absolutely, the latter conversed.

It comes to doubt that the mental features disavowed as the analytical are, in themselves, but little susceptible of analysis. We appreciate them only in their effects. We know, then, among other things, that they are always to their possessor, when unordinarily possessed, a source of the liveliest enjoyment. As the strong man exults in his physical ability, delighting in such exercises as call his muscles into action, so glories the analyst in that mental activity which disentangles. He derives pleasure from even the most trivial occupations bringing his talent into play. He is fond of enigmas, of conundrums, of hieroglyphics - exhibiting in his solutions of each and all a degree of acumen which appears to the ordinary apprehension preternatural. His results, brought about by the very tone and course of method, have, in truth, the whole air of intuition.

The faculty in question is possibly much invigorated by mathematical study, and especially by that highest branch of it which, unjustly, and mostly on account of its retrograde operations, has been called, as if *par excellence*, analysis. Yet to calculate is not in itself to analyse. A chess-player, for example, does the one without effort at the other. It follows that the game of chess, in its effects upon mental character, is greatly misunderstood. I am not now writing a treatise, but simply prefacing a somewhat peculiar narrative by observations very much at random - will, therefore, take occasion to assert that the higher powers of the reflective intellect are more decidedly and more rapidly taxed by the intricate game of draughts than by all the elaborate frivolity of chess. In this latter, where the pieces have different and bizarre motions, various and variable values, that which is only complex is mistaken (a not unusual error) for that which is profound. The attention is here called powerfully into play. If it flag for an instant, an oversight is committed resulting in injury or defeat. The possible moves being not only manifold but involute, the chances of such oversights are multiplied; and in more cases out of ten it is the more concentrative rather than the more acute player who conquers. In draughts, on the contrary, where the moves are unique and have but little variation, the probabilities of inadvertence are diminished, and the mere attention being left comparatively unemployed, what advantages are obtained by either party are obtained by superior acumen. To be less abstract, let us suppose a game of draughts where the pieces are reduced to four kings, and where, of course, no oversight is to be expected. It is obvious that here the victory can be decided (the players being at all equal) only by some *recherche* movement, the result of some strong exertion of the intellect. Deprived of ordinary resources the analyst throws himself into the spirit of his opponent, identifies himself therewith, and not infrequently sees thus, at a glance, the sole methods (sometimes indeed absurdly simple ones) by which he may reduce into miscalculation or hurry into error.

What has long been noted for its influence upon what are termed the calculating powers; and men of the highest order of intellect have been known to take an apparently unaccountable delight in it, while eschewing chess as frivolous. Beyond doubt there is nothing of a similar nature so greatly taxing the faculty of analysis. The best chess-players in Christendom may be little more than the best players of chess - but proficiency in what implies capacity for success in all those more important undertakings where mind struggles with mind. When I say proficiency, I mean that perfection in the game which includes a comprehension of all the forces (whatever be their character) from which legitimate advantage may be derived. These are not only manifold but multiform, and lie frequently among recesses of thought altogether inaccessible to the ordinary understanding. To observe attentively is to remember distinctly; and so for the concentrative chess-player will do very well at what; while the rules of Hoyle (themselves based upon the mere mechanism