

The
ANNOTATED
Alice

ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND
&
THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

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With an Introduction and Notes by
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5. In his article "Alice on the Stage," cited earlier, Carroll wrote:

"The Red Queen I pictured as a Fury, but of another type; *her* passion must be cold and calm; she must be formal and strict, yet not unkindly; pedantic to the tenth degree, the concentrated essence of all governesses!"

It has been conjectured that the Red Queen was modeled after Miss Prickett, governess for the Liddell children (who called her by the nickname of "Pricks"). Oxford gossip once linked Carroll and Miss Prickett romantically, because of his frequent visits to the Liddell home, but it soon became evident that Carroll was interested in the children, not the governess. In Paramount's motion picture of *Alice* the role of Red Queen was taken by Edna May Oliver.

and full in sight of the hill she had been so long aiming at.

"Where do you come from?" said the Red Queen. "And where are you going? Look up, speak nicely, and don't twiddle your fingers all the time."⁵

Alice attended to all these directions, and explained, as well as she could, that she had lost her way.

"I don't know what you mean by *your* way," said the Queen: "all the ways about here belong to *me*—but why did you come out here at all?" she added in a kinder tone. "Curtsey while you're thinking what to say. It saves time."

Alice wondered a little at this, but she was too much in awe of the Queen to disbelieve it. "I'll try it when I go home," she thought to herself, "the next time I'm a little late for dinner."

"It's time for you to answer now," the Queen said, looking at her watch: "open your mouth a *little* wider when you speak, and always say 'your Majesty.'"

"I only wanted to see what the garden was like, your Majesty—"

"That's right," said the Queen, patting her on the head, which Alice didn't like at all: "though, when you say 'garden'—*I've* seen gardens, compared with which this would be a wilderness."

Alice didn't dare to argue the point, but went on: "—and I thought I'd try and find my way to the top of that hill—"

"When you say 'hill,'" the Queen interrupted, "I could show you hills, in comparison with which you'd call that a valley."

"No, I shouldn't," said Alice, surprised into contradicting her at last: "a hill *can't* be a valley, you know. That would be nonsense—"

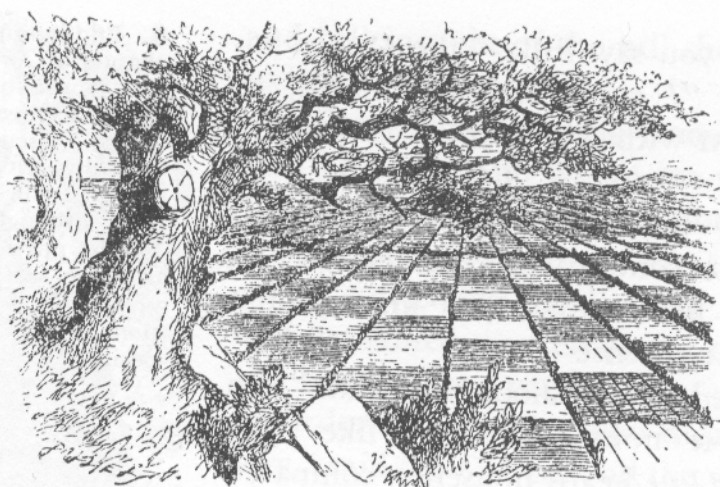
The Red Queen shook her head. "You may call it 'nonsense' if you like," she said, "but *I've* heard nonsense, compared with which that would be as sensible as a dictionary!"⁶

Alice curtseyed again, as she was afraid from the Queen's tone that she was a *little* offended: and they walked on in silence till they got to the top of the little hill.

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 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

6. Eddington, in the concluding chapter of *The Nature of the Physical World*, quotes this remark of the Red Queen in connection with a subtle discussion of what he calls the physicist's "problem of nonsense." In brief, Eddington argues that, although it may be nonsense for the physicist to affirm a reality of some sort beyond the laws of physics, it is as sensible as a dictionary beside the nonsense of supposing that there is no such reality.



7. So many memorable passages have been written in which life itself is compared to an enormous game of chess that a sizable anthology could be assembled out of them. Sometimes the players are men themselves, seeking to manipulate their fellow-men as one manipulates chess pieces. The following passage is from George Eliot's *Felix Holt*:

"Fancy what a game of chess would be if all the chessmen had passions and intellects, more or less small and cunning; if you were not only uncertain about your adversary's men, but a little uncertain also about your own; if your Knight could shuffle himself on to a new square on the sly; if your Bishop, in disgust at your Castling, could wheedle your Pawns out of their places; and if your Pawns, hating you because they are Pawns, could make away from their appointed posts that you might get checkmate on a sudden. You might be the longest-headed of deductive reasoners, and yet you might be beaten by your own Pawns. You would be especially likely to be beaten, if you depended arrogantly on your mathematical imagination, and regarded your passionate pieces with contempt.

chess that's being played—all over the world⁷—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's⁸ too young to play; and you're in the Second Square to begin with: when you get to the Eighth Square you'll be a Queen—" Just at this moment, somehow or other, they began to run.

Alice never could quite make out, in thinking it over afterwards, how it was that they began: all she remembers is, that they were running hand in hand, and the Queen went so fast that it was all she could do to keep up with her: and still the

Queen kept crying "Faster! Faster!" but Alice felt she *could not* go faster, though she had no breath left to say so.

The most curious part of the thing was, that the trees and the other things round them never changed their places at all: however fast they went, they never seemed to pass anything. "I wonder if all the things move along with us?" thought poor puzzled Alice. And the Queen seemed to guess her thoughts, for she cried "Faster! Don't try to talk!"

Not that Alice had any idea of doing *that*. She felt as if she would never be able to talk again, she was getting so much out of breath: and still the Queen cried "Faster! Faster!" and dragged her along. "Are we nearly there?" Alice managed to pant out at last.

"Nearly there!" the Queen repeated. "Why, we passed it ten minutes ago! Faster!" And they ran on for a time in silence, with the wind whistling in Alice's ears, and almost blowing her hair off her head, she fancied.

"Now! Now!" cried the Queen. "Faster! Faster!" And they went so fast that at last they seemed to skim through the air, hardly touching the ground with their feet, till suddenly, just as Alice was getting quite exhausted, they stopped, and she found herself sitting on the ground, breathless and giddy.

The Queen propped her up against a

"Yet this imaginary chess is easy compared with a game a man has to play against his fellow-men with other fellow-men for his instruments . . ."

Sometimes the players are God and Satan. William James dallies with this theme in his essay on *The Dilemma of Determinism*, and H. G. Wells echoes it in the prologue of his fine novel about education, *The Undying Fire*. Like the Book of Job on which it is modeled, Wells's story opens with a conversation between God and the devil. They are playing chess.

"But the chess they play is not the little ingenious game that originated in India; it is on an altogether different scale. The Ruler of the Universe creates the board, the pieces, and the rules; he makes all the moves; he may make as many moves as he likes whenever he likes; his antagonist, however, is permitted to introduce a slight inexplicable inaccuracy into each move, which necessitates further moves in correction. The Creator determines and conceals the aim of the game, and it is never clear whether the purpose of the adversary is to defeat or assist him in his unfathomable project. Apparently the adversary cannot win, but also he cannot lose so long as he can keep the game going. But he is concerned, it would seem, in preventing the development of any reasoned scheme in the game."

Sometimes the gods themselves are pieces in a higher game, and the players of this game in turn are pieces in an endless hierarchy of larger chessboards. "And there is merriment overhead," says Mother Sereda, after enlarging on this theme, in James Branch Cabell's *Jurgen*, "but it is very far away."

3. Lily, the White Queen's daughter and one of the white pawns, was encountered by Alice in the



previous chapter. In choosing the name "Lily," Carroll may have had in mind his young friend Lilia Scott Macdonald, the eldest daughter of George Macdonald (see Note 2, Chapter 1). Lilia was called "My White Lily" by her father, and Carroll's letters to her (after she passed fifteen) contain many teasing references to her advancing age. The statement here that Lily is too young to play chess may well have been part of this teasing.

There is a record (Collingwood's biography of Carroll, page 427) of a white kitten named Lily ("My imperial kitten" the White Queen calls her child in the previous chapter), which Carroll gave to one of his child-friends. This, however, may have been after the writing of *Through the Looking-Glass*.

9. This has probably been quoted more often (usually in reference to rapidly changing political situations) than any other passage in the *Alice* books.

tree, and said kindly, "You may rest a little, now."

Alice looked round her in great surprise. "Why, I do believe we've been under this tree the whole time! Everything's just as it was!"

"Of course it is," said the Queen. "What would you have it?"

"Well, in *our* country," said Alice, still panting a little, "you'd generally get to somewhere else—if you ran very fast for a long time as we've been doing."

"A slow sort of country!" said the Queen. "Now, *here*, you see, it takes all the running *you* can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that."⁹

"I'd rather not try, please!" said Alice.

"I'm quite content to stay here—only I *am* so hot and thirsty!"

"I know what *you'd* like!" the Queen said good-naturedly, taking a little box out of her pocket. "Have a biscuit?"

Alice thought it would not be civil to say "No," though it wasn't at all what she wanted. So she took it, and ate it as well as she could: and it was *very* dry: and she thought she had never been so nearly choked in all her life.

"While you're refreshing yourself," said the Queen, "I'll just take the measurements." And she took a ribbon out of her pocket, marked in inches, and began measuring the ground, and sticking little pegs in here and there.

"At the end of two yards," she said, putting in a peg to mark the distance, "I shall give you your directions—have another biscuit?"

"No, thank you," said Alice: "one's *quite* enough!"

"Thirst quenched, I hope?" said the Queen.

Alice did not know what to say to this, but luckily the Queen did not wait for an answer, but went on. "At the end of *three* yards I shall repeat them—for fear of your forgetting them. At the end of *four*, I shall say good-bye. And at the end of *five*, I shall go!"

She had got all the pegs put in by this time, and Alice looked on with great in-

terest as she returned to the tree, and then began slowly walking down the row.

At the two-yard peg she faced round, and said "A pawn goes two squares in its first move, you know. So you'll go *very* quickly through the Third Square—by railway, I should think—and you'll find yourself in the Fourth Square in no time. Well, *that* square belongs to Tweedledum and Tweedledee—the Fifth is mostly water—the Sixth belongs to Humpty Dumpty—But you make no remark?"

"I—I didn't know I had to make one—just then," Alice faltered out.

"You *should* have said," the Queen went on in a tone of grave reproof, "'It's extremely kind of you to tell me all this'—however, we'll suppose it said—the Seventh Square is all forest—however, one of the Knights will show you the way—and in the Eighth Square we shall be Queens together, and it's all feasting and fun!" Alice got up and curtsyed, and sat down again.

At the next peg the Queen turned again, and this time she said "Speak in French when you can't think of the English for a thing—turn out your toes as you walk—and remember who you are!" She did not wait for Alice to curtsy, this time, but walked on quickly to the next peg, where she turned for a moment to say "Good-bye," and then hurried on to the last.

How it happened, Alice never knew, but exactly as she came to the last peg, she was gone.¹⁰ Whether she vanished into the air, or whether she ran quickly into the wood ("and she *can* run very fast!" thought Alice), there was no way of guessing, but she was gone, and Alice began to remember that she was a Pawn, and that it would soon be time for her to move.

10. A glance at the position of the chess pieces, on the diagram in Carroll's preface, shows that Alice (the white pawn) and the Red Queen are side by side on adjacent squares. The first move of the problem now takes place as the Queen moves away to KR4 (the fourth square on the Red King's rook file, counting from the red side of the board. In this notation the squares are always numbered from the side of the piece that is moved).

Looking-Glass Insects

Of course the first thing to do was to make a grand survey of the country she was going to travel through. "What a queer thing - very queer thing," thought Alice, "at the start of things - I hope of being able to see a little higher than I do now - there are some principal towns - I think I'm the only one but I don't think it's got any more. Principal towns - by what are they called? - making honey - I don't think they can be bees - nobody ever saw bees a mile off, you know -" and for some time she staid there, watching one of them as he was building a wall among the flowers, going as probably into the "just as I think a regular bee," thought Alice. "However, it's not anything but a regular bee - it's not anything but a regular bee - it's not anything but a regular bee -"