

Musical.

All correspondence intended for this column should be directed to the Musical Editor, CANADIAN SPECTATOR Office, 162 St. James Street, Montreal.

ILLITERATE VOCALISTS.

It is surprising how few of the many who sing a little really understand the principles of harmony or even musical notation. Most of these people would laugh at the idea of getting a friend to read a letter or a newspaper for them, but with a piece of music they are perfectly helpless, and must have it sung or played over several times before they can repeat it for themselves. Were musical notation, or the principles of music, difficult to understand, we might perhaps excuse them, but it seems strange that persons who have succeeded in learning languages, arithmetic, and other comparatively difficult studies should be satisfied to learn their songs at second hand, when, with a few months application, they might read them for themselves. We do not wish at present to discuss the different systems of musical notations (all these systems leading to the one end) nor do we expect all amateurs to be able to sing intervals perfectly at sight; but we do think that they might learn something of rhythm and accent and be able to read sufficiently well to verify what they are singing. The faculty of sounding intervals correctly at sight is only to be acquired by long and constant practice, but the time-signs are easily understood, and anyone with a good ear and due appreciation of rhythm may learn to sing perfectly in time in a few weeks, yet it is in this respect that most amateurs fail, and not in sounding the different intervals. What would we think of a man who with a first-class watch in his pocket, continually bored his friends by enquiring the time, simply because he was too lazy to learn to read the dial? Ninety-nine out of a hundred amateurs are in a similar position; instead of learning the principles of notation and counting the time, they guess it continually, or ask a friend to interpret it for them, and no matter how much they may study and practice a piece, they are always uncertain about the time, the ear in this respect being unreliable. We are sure that if our amateur vocalists would give the matter a thought they would learn the time-signs, and measure the notes and rests, singing both solos and concerted pieces with much more ease and confidence.

MUSIC THE ECSTASY OF WORSHIP.

Music is the very heart, the very ecstasy of worship. It is the worship of angels. Earthly worship would soon grow dull and dead without it. Even a heathen could say that the first and noblest use of music is the offering of praise to the immortals, and the next purifying, regulating, harmonising of the soul. Does not Scripture bear him out? Does it not ring with music? Does it not tell us how at the creation "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" And as the Bible begins with the song of the morning stars over man created, and ends with the "sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies" over man redeemed, so its central moment, uniting both, is the carol of angels at the Saviour's birth.

It was no small cause of dulness and deadness of the eighteenth century that this mighty influence for good was left at the service of the devil, while weary congregations were drowning dull doggerel to coarse and tuneless tunes. Hymns began when Christian worship began, and they revived when Christian love revived. It was after having sung a hymn that our Lord crossed the brook Kedron to enter on His agony in the garden. It was with hymns at midnight that Paul and Silas, their backs still bruised with Roman rods, turned the prison of Philippi into an Odeum. It was the voice of boy singers at Erfordt with their hymnal that woke Luther from his swoon; it was the hymn of a little girl on a doorstep at Weimar that solaced the exiled Melancthon. They have nerved the martyr's patience; they have soothed the mourner's anguish. Thank God for their revival! The generations which have glowed to the fiery appeals of Whitfield and been lulled by the soothing calm of Keble, could be content no longer with the halting doggerel of Sternhold and Hopkins, or the drowsy commonplace of Tate and Brady. Thank God for every sweet and moving hymn of Wesley and Toplady, of Ken and Doddridge; and thank God that we can have these in all their tenderness, in all their devotion, at every village church.—*Canon Farrar.*

The *Herald* recently disparaged the opera of "Aida," while it lauded "Trovatore" to the skies. The *Musical & Dramatic Times* states that "at St. Petersburg, 'Aida,' with Mlle. Salla and M. Masini, was successful. 'Trovatore,' with Mme. Smeroski and M. Carbone, a failure." In Russia they are excellent critics, and as none but artists of celebrity venture to that cold clime, causes for the failure of "Trovatore" may naturally be sought for in some other direction than that of the singers.

ALFRED CELLIER, the assistant of Sullivan, has selected a chorus for the performance of "Pinafore." He was astonished to find so many sight-readers in New York. This may seem novel to our many readers, but the mystery is unveiled when we tell them that every chorister who was tested for sight reading received a copy of "Pinafore," and had to sing something from the nautical operetta at sight. Englishmen have their own way to get at the bottom truth, you know.

The same piano played upon by different pianists exhibits effects and a variety of tone that cannot help but cause wonder in those whose perceptive faculties are on the alert. The power and diversity of touch is something wonderful, and words fail fully to explain what the ear quickly notes. The finest-toned piano, in the hands of some performers, appears harsh and tinny, leaving an impression upon the listener that the manufacturer has been very unsuccessful in his effort to produce "a mixed, sonorous and melodious quality of tone." On the other hand, we find some few players possessing a touch so exquisite and sensitive that even a well-worn instrument is made to exhibit a sympathetic and singing quality of tone, beside an unexplainable charm and grace added thereto. What is denominated "spirituality" no doubt is at the bottom of all such peculiar manifestations, although different qualities of animal matter may have a share in the production of such mysterious effects. "The art of phrasing" can no doubt be taught mechanically, as well as the "art of singing," but if the innate something is not part and parcel of the individual, how can the phrasing be anything but mechanical? Even in these days of wonderful execution and of the ever-increasing number who actually acquire it, the old maxim, *poeta nascitur non fit*, is equally as true as centuries ago. So few pianists look beyond an "irreproachable technique," because so many pure mechanics make music a business now. So long as they can execute five hundred notes a minute they are happy, and view with something akin to contempt the composer who demands from them the playing of only four hundred and ninety a minute. A composition must be difficult and "full of sound," else modern pianists will most assuredly pass it by on the other side. To hammer away is much easier than to play with a truly soulful effect, because the former may be acquired, the latter, however, never. When music is viewed as a business only, true art cannot but greatly suffer.—*Music Trade Review.*

Chess.

All Correspondence intended for this Column, and Exchanges, should be directed to the Chess Editor, CANADIAN SPECTATOR Office, 162 St. James Street, Montreal.

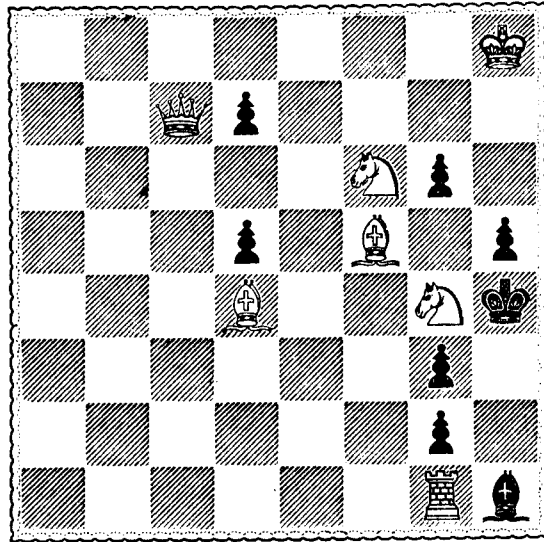
Montreal, Dec. 13th, 1879.

PROBLEM NO. LI.

First Prize Problem, Brighton *Herald* Tourney.

By Mr. J. G. Nix, Tucker's Cross Roads, Tennessee, U. S. A.

BLACK.



WHITE.

White to play and mate in three moves.

SOLUTION TO PROBLEM NO. XLVIII.—From the Brighton *Herald*.

White.	Black.	White.	Black.	White.
1 P to Q B 6	P to Q Kt 4	2 R to Q B 5	Any	3 R or Kt mates
	If P takes P	2 R takes R P	P to K 4	3 R to Q 5 mate.

GAME NO. XLVII.

The Second of two games recently played in the Dundee Chess Club, between Mr. G. B. Fraser, the strongest player in Scotland, and Mr. H. Macdonald, a talented member of the Dundee Club, which affords a good illustration of the defence in the Thorold variation of the Allgaier Gambit. From *The Field*. Notes by Steinitz.

ALLGAIER GAMBIT.

WHITE.	BLACK.	WHITE.	BLACK.	WHITE.	BLACK.
Mr H Macdonald.	Mr G B Fraser.	10 B to K 5 (ch)	Kt to K B 3	20 Kt to B 5 (ch)	B takes Kt
1 P to K 4	P to K 4	11 Q to Q 2	Kt to B 3	21 Q takes Kt	B to K 6 (ch)
2 P to K B 4	P takes P	12 Q to K B 4	Kt takes B (a 2)	22 K to Kt sq	P to K R 4
3 Kt to K B 3	P to K Kt 4	13 P takes Kt	Kt to Q 4	23 P to Q B 4 (g)	R to K B sq
4 P to K R 4	P to Kt 5	14 Q takes P	B to K 3	24 Q to Kt 6 ch (h)	Q takes Q
5 Kt to Kt 5	P to K R 3	15 Kt to Q 2 (b)	P to Q B 3	25 B takes Q	Kt to B 5
6 Kt takes P	K takes Kt	16 Castles (Q R)	B to Q B 4	26 B to K 4	R to B 2
7 P to Q 4	P to Q 4 (a 1)	17 Kt to K B sq (c)	Q to K 2 (d)		
8 B takes P	P takes P	18 Kt to Kt 3	Q R to K Kt sq		
9 B to B 4 (ch)	K to Kt 2	19 B to Q 3 (f)	Q to K sq		

NOTES.—(a 1) Some of the strongest practitioners consider this the right defence. It either breaks the adverse centre, which is White's chief compensation for the piece sacrificed, or blocks the hostile K B, the most important attacking piece in the early part of this opening.

(a 2) Here Mr. Fraser introduces a diversion which appears to us quite as sound as the one adopted in the first game. [The move referred to was Black 12 B to K 2 and the game proceeded, 13 Kt to Q B 3—R to K B sq; 14 Castles (Q R)—Kt takes B, on which Mr. Steinitz remarks: "Bold play apparently, but well conceived in reality, for Black incurred no permanent danger from allowing the adverse R to open on the Q."]

—CHESS ED. CAN. SPEC.]

(b) The Kt is in this variation reduced to comparative inactivity, not being able to develop at Q B 3.

(c) Best for defensive and attacking purposes. It prevents the pinning of the Kt, and brings the latter into action on the K side.

(d) Kt to B 6 was tempting, but would have failed if correctly answered. Of course White could not capture the Kt, on account of the reply B to R 6 (ch), but he could simply take the Q, followed by R takes K R (not Q R) coming out with even pieces and a P ahead.

(e) Unaware of the hidden danger. The proper play was K R to K B sq, which was sufficient answer against the coming attack, e.g., Black 18 K R to K B sq; 19 Kt to R 5 (ch) or B to Q 3—K to R sq; 20 Q to Kt 6—B to K 6 (ch); 21 Kt to Kt sq—Q to B 2, &c.

(f) White fails to see that he could win here by the following forced line of play: 19 Kt to R 5 (ch)—K to B sq; 20 K R to B sq (ch)—K to K sq, best. (If B interposes, P to K 6 follows.) 21 Kt to B 6 (ch)—K to Q sq. (If Kt takes Kt, the P would retake.) 22 B takes Kt—P takes B; 23 Kt takes Q—B takes Kt, best. (If Q to Kt 2, the Kt discovers ch at B 6, followed by R to Q sq.) 24 Q takes B (ch)—K to K sq. (If K to B sq, White replies R to B 7.) 25 R to B 6 and wins.

(g) Of no more use now. Black's counter attack becomes too strong.

(h) He could not help himself. If the Q retreated to K 4, Black could further press him by R to B 5.

CHESS INTELLIGENCE.

THE MONTREAL CHESS CLUB.—Since the alteration in the constitution and management of the Montreal Chess Club, considerable enthusiasm has been infused, and it is pleasant to see, almost daily in the afternoon, from six to twelve combatants in active and eager encounter, at the Gymnasium in Mansfield Street. Through the generosity of Mr. A. R. Brown, one of the members, several sets of men and handsome inlaid tables have been presented to the Club, and Mr. Henderson, the new Secretary, is indefatigable in placing the Club on a good and sound basis. The order and cordiality, which now reign, are in pleasing contrast to the state of things to which we drew attention a few months ago. The Club now numbers some twenty-five members, and we take this occasion to inform the chess players of Montreal that the subscription to the Club is \$5, which includes the use of the Mercantile Library and Reading Room. Chess playing may be indulged in all day long, but the regular Club meetings are Tuesday and Saturday evenings.

ITEMS.—Sundry straws point to a possible match between Zukertort and Steinitz.—A chess column, under the management of Mr. F. Healy, the celebrated problem composer, has been started in the *British Empire*.—There is the possibility of a match between a member of the Montreal Club and a strong New York player.—International Tourney. Score: America, 28; Great Britain, 25; Drawn, 8. Mrs. Gilbert will probably win all her four games against Mr. Gossip. This will be a well-earned feather in her cap.—Mr. Delannoy's book will shortly be published. We have received orders for several, and would be glad if gentlemen, who may desire to get a copy, will at once communicate their wishes to us.—A Problem Tourney, open to the world, has been started in *La Revue*, &c., under the management of M. Rosenthal.—An interesting episode took place at Cheadle, in England, during Mr. Blackburne's recent visit, when he played ten games simultaneously blindfold. During the contest it became necessary to remove to other premises to prevent an adjournment, and some boards were disturbed in the process. Mr. Blackburne, having, as a blindfold player necessarily must, the positions perfectly in his mind, set them right again, to the great wonder and delight of his opponents. Mr. Blackburne won 7 and drew 3. At Derby he won 25 and lost 1 out of 27 simultaneous games.