

Musical.

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

To the Musical Editor of the CANADIAN SPECTATOR:

DEAR SIR,—In your last issue I noticed a letter signed "Old Aunt Euphrosyne," in which a distinct charge is made—that at the late performance of "Pinafore" by the Operatic Society, it is said, "a lady began her part several bars ahead of time and then openly accused the conductor of giving her the wrong note," and then goes on to say that "many of the audience who knew the play perceived the singer and not the orchestra was wrong."

Now, sir, it so happens that only one such occurrence took place, and consequently "Old Aunt Euphrosyne" might just as well have given the lady's name; and had she taken the trouble to enquire into the matter, she would not have insulted the lady in such a gross manner. The facts are these: Sir Joseph Porter omitted a solo and took up the dialogue in the wrong place. The conductor signed to Buttercup to continue, which she did, at the end of which her solo commenced. The orchestra, who were not aware of such change, commenced the accompaniment to Sir Joseph's solo in place of Buttercup's, and nothing but the lady's presence of mind saved a regular fizzle. "Old Aunt Euphrosyne" can refer to the conductor to see if such is not the case.

If this is a sample of her experiences, the least said the better.

I am, dear sir, yours truly, A Lover of Truth.

MEDELSSOHN CHOIR.

The concert of the Mendelssohn Choir, which takes place this week, bids fair to be the finest of the kind ever given in Montreal. The choir is so well and favourably known that it is needless to say anything concerning it, except that the selection from Mendelssohn's "Loreley" will be accompanied by a full orchestra. Miss Hubbell, who takes the soprano solo, is reported to be one of the finest Oratorio singers in America, and we know that Madame Rive-King and Mr. Prume can hardly be excelled. In view of the heavy expense necessary to such an undertaking (which is done solely for the benefit of art), we think that all lovers of music should strain a point to be present on this occasion.

MUSIC IN AMERICA.

There is probably no country on the globe where so much money is annually expended in the pursuit of music as in America. There is no country which is so liberal in its support of musicians, musical papers, and teachers: therefore, in one sense, at least, our country is the most musical of nations; but this sense has, unfortunately, been in a large degree the mercantile one. In a country where there are no privileged classes, where every man is the architect of his own fortunes, and where the artisan of to-day may be the aristocrat of to-morrow, this must necessarily be so. People are too much occupied in the pursuit of a fortune to attend to the cultivation of the musical sense; and, the fortune once attained, they purchase music as a necessary adjunct of a more refined and luxurious life, and, of course, as in furnishing their mansions, or buying their pictures, they want the best, without being conversant enough with the subject to know what that "best" is. It is this fact which has given musical criticism in America an enormous power, which, in the past, has not always been wielded in the best interests of art. Independent thought in music has necessarily been a plant of slow growth.

The contempt for home talent in music (which was perfectly just twenty-five years ago) has outlived its proper time. The reliance upon any and all foreign wares, in the musical market, has been far too blindly indulged in; and many a European failure has become an American success, on account of its being viewed through the anti-native spectacles. It is time that America should throw off these swaddling-clothes which are so long outgrown, and judge the work of foreign nations purely upon its merits. All the European countries possess their quota of musical trash in a greater or less degree.

England for example, with her centuries of experience, with composers of merit and old institutions, has only reached a popular taste for musical sugar-plums. One music-hall song, one sentimental ballad, will out-weigh a score of greater works in profit and in popular estimation. All the great English composers are forced to give sops to the popular Cerberus, by writing songs about drowned sailors, parting lovers, broken hearts, and "bright beyonds." The singers who shout the loudest and highest, the violinists who gyrate the most and play the softest, are still the ones who are clasped to the popular heart. Schumann and Wagner have shaken the dust of England from their feet, with a feeling that music, the true music, had no place there. Probably there is no city where one may hear so many of the world's great musicians as in London; but there is also no city where their real worth is so little appreciated, and where their reception depends so much upon adventitious circumstances; Manchester (through the work of one man—Hallé) standing much higher in the appreciation of art, though not commanding so many artists.

At least, our error in America is only one-half of this; for all foreign musicians have been enthusiastically received, thereby depreciating the value of the welcome. In Germany matters are not so bad, although there is still a great conservatism in accepting anything which has not the sanction of age.

But we have not to deal with the good, but with the trashy part of music, to point our moral. The songs of Franz Schubert, Jensen, Grieg, Schumann, etc., one would think would preclude the possibility of any weak, local compositions coming forward; yet hosts of lesser (and "sweeter") writers have grown up as weeds beside the wheat. It took years before the picturesqueness of Franz was liked as well as the sugar of Gumbert; and many, even of the critics, accused him of overloading his accompaniments, so accustomed were they to the "pom, pom, pom," of the procession of simple chords which constituted the accompaniment of nine-tenths of the songs of his predecessors. In simple instrumental pieces, it is not too much to say, that one can find as much spoiled music paper in Germany as in America itself, though harmonic misdeeds are of less frequent occurrence; yet this trash is held in much higher esteem here than better native work. The imprint of Berlin, Leipsic, or Mayence (like charity) covers a multitude of sins. We can name European editions of both studies and pieces which are faultier than those of our leading American houses, and yet are used by many ill-informed teachers of the middle and lower rank, because of their foreign origin.

It is to be desired that America should look to its field at home, which has grown surprisingly while its eyes have scarcely noticed it.

We are a cosmopolitan race; far more so to-day than twenty-five years ago; and such a race has a great advantage in the field of art, for art (and especially music) is prone to fall into ruts, and schools arise possessing true principles who detest other schools possessing canons equally true.

Germany hates France (in art), and both unite in condemning England. From such narrowness and strife, America will start, free. It remains to be seen whether to the borrowed traits of European schools of composition she will add characteristics of her own. We believe that it will eventually be so, and that as we now lead the world in the manufacture of pianos, we may yet find a high position in the exercise of the arts. At present, America's duty is to be less conservative in welcoming American performers, compositions, and teachers, and to be more discriminating in the acceptance of foreign work.—Musical Herald.

In our advertising columns will be found a "History of the Centennial award to Weber Pianos, and how it was obtained," which we recommend to the perusal of those interested in this now celebrated instrument.

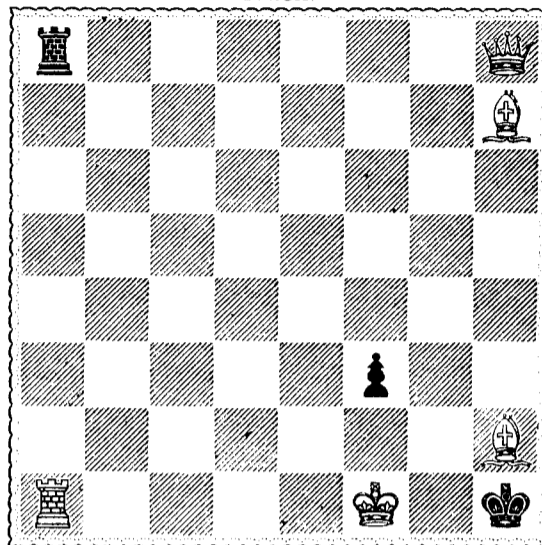
Chess.

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Montreal, Feb. 7th, 1880.

PROBLEM NO. LVIII.

By Herr G. Chocholous. From the Wiener Novellistische Blätter.



White to play and mate in two moves.

ERRATUM.—In Game No. 51, Black's first two moves should read:—1 P to Q B 4, and 2 Q Kt to B 3.

GAME NO. LIII.

We have much pleasure in presenting our readers with the score of the First Game in playing off the tie between Capt. McKenzie and Mr. Grundy.

Table showing the chess game between Capt. McKenzie (White) and Mr. Grundy (Black). The game starts with 1 P to K 4, 2 K Kt to B 3, 3 Q Kt to B 3, 4 Kt takes P, 5 K takes B, 6 P to Q 4, 7 B to Q 4, 8 K R to B sq, 9 K to Kt sq, 10 P to K Kt 3, 11 B to K Kt 5, 12 Q to Q 2. Black's moves include 13 R takes Kt, 14 B takes P, 15 B to K B, 16 B to K Kt 2, 17 B takes R, 18 R to K B, 19 O to B 4, 20 P takes P, 21 Kt to Q 5, 22 Q takes B, 23 R takes Q, 24 P to B 3, 25 B takes Kt. The game continues with various captures and moves until 37 P to Q Kt 7, where White resigns.

GAME NO. LIV.

MR. SHAW'S CORRESPONDENCE TOURNEY.

IRREGULAR OPENING.

Table showing the chess game between Prof. Hicks (White) and Mr. Narraway (Black). The game starts with 1 P to Q 4, 2 P to K B 4, 3 P to K 3, 4 B to Q 3, 5 K Kt to B 3, 6 P to Q B 3, 7 Q takes B, 8 Castles, 9 Q Kt to Q 2, 10 P to Q Kt 4 (b), 11 Kt to K 5, 12 Q P takes Kt (c), 13 Kt to K B 3, 14 P takes P, 15 K to R sq, 16 P to K R 3, 17 P to Q R 4. Black's moves include 18 P takes P, 19 Q takes Q, 20 B to Q 2, 21 Q R to Q Kt sq, 22 Q R to Q Kt 3, 23 K R to Q Kt sq, 24 P to K Kt 4, 25 K to R 2, 26 K to Kt 3, 27 P takes P, 28 Kt to K sq, 29 Kt to Q 3, 30 K to K B 3, 31 P to K 4, 32 K takes P, 33 B takes P, 34 B takes B, 35 Q R to Q Kt 2 (f), R to B 2. The game continues with various captures and moves until 53 Resigns.

NOTES.—(a) The opening is carefully conducted by both players. (b) The object of this ally is not very apparent. Better to have proceeded as in next move. (c) We would certainly have brought another piece into play here by K B P takes Kt. The result of the move made is at once seen by Black's 13th move. (d) We much prefer Black's game now. (e) We would have offered the exchange here, recapturing, if the B were taken, with Kt, which would then have been well posted and very threatening on K 5. (f) The object of this move is beyond our ken. (g) The game has every appearance of a draw. (h) This is correct play. His K is now out of all danger and vigorously supports his past P. (i) This P must now become exceedingly dangerous. (k) This is the worst move at his disposal, but he has not one to redeem the game. If 52 Kt to B 3—K to Kt 6, and the P must queen.

CHESS INTELLIGENCE.

HAMILTON CORRESPONDENCE TOURNEY.—The list of contestants in this Tourney has closed with nineteen entries instead of twenty-five, as originally intended. This reduces the value of the prizes in a proportionate degree, and they now stand:—1st Prize, \$50; 2nd, \$20; 3rd, \$15; 4th, \$10; 5th, \$5. The names and addresses of the players are as follows: H. J. Anderson, Allantown, Pa., U.S.; C. A. Boivin, St. Hyacinthe, P.Q.; Rev. Mr. Burque, St. Hyacinthe, P.Q.; W. Braithwaite, Unionville, Ont.; J. Clawson, St. John, N.B.; W. J. Ferris, Newcastle, Del., U.S.; T. H. Forster, Lansing, Mich., U.S.; J. Henderson, 174 St. Hypolite street, Montreal, P.Q.; L. E. Hendricks, Charleston, South Carolina, U.S.; W. H. Hicks, 157 Lusignan street, Montreal, P.Q.; W. H. Judd, Hamilton, Ont.; H. N. Kittson, Hamilton, Ont.; C. Mohle, Hoboken, N.J.; J. E. Narraway, Bank of Nova Scotia, St. John, N.B.; F. E. N. Robertson, Hamilton, Ont.; D. E. Rogers, 173 Cass street, Detroit, Mich., I. Ryall, Hamilton, Ont.; J. W. Shaw, 26 Windsor street, Montreal, P.Q.; J. T. Wyld, Halifax, N.S. Dr. Ryall, the Conductor of the Tourney, has issued a circular, in which he begs the contestants to use the utmost despatch in sending their moves, not to prolong games needlessly, and to be particular in recording their moves so as to prevent, as far as possible, loss of time or the occurrence of false moves, which may lead to the forfeiture of the game. After receiving three notifications that the time limit of 48 hours has been exceeded by any player, the Conductor intimates that he will proceed to the infliction of the penalty in that case made and provided. We wish the Doctor and his merry band of warriors every success.

FIFTH AMERICAN CHESS CONGRESS.—The tie for the 1st Prize in the Grand Tourney between Mr. Grundy and Capt. McKenzie was decided to depend on whoever scored two games first. This took place last Saturday, when the Captain secured an easy victory, scoring two games one after the other in less than forty moves each. We congratulate Captain McKenzie on his position, which this victory secures to him, of the Champion of American Chess Players.