

Musical.

Notices of Concerts in Provincial towns, &c. are invited, so as to keep musical amateurs well informed concerning the progress of the art in Canada.

All communications to contain the name and address of the sender.

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

CAN'T MONTREAL KEEP HER MUSICIANS?

Under this heading the *Witness* calls attention to the fact that our musicians are one by one seeking new fields for the exercise of their talents, and want to know why it is that we cannot retain the few educated men who have for some time been the only exponents of art in the city. It is very strange that in a city so large as Montreal, so little encouragement is given to musicians; it cannot be that our people do not care for music, else how is it that music is introduced so largely as an attraction at almost every gathering, public and private? The fact is that though we love music, and like to have it of the very best kind, we are not prepared to pay for it; and though compliments are very good in their way musicians cannot live on compliments or votes of thanks. Musicians have been asked and expected to play for all charitable performances *gratis*; they have had to compete as regards prices with ambitious amateurs, ready to take any position for a trifle; and in the churches, where music draws at least half the congregation, the organists receive about *one-sixth* as much as the preachers, although many of the latter could be replaced by any fairly educated man, while the place of any of the former can only be filled by one who has devoted years to the special study of that branch of the profession.

We have had in Montreal as good organists as can be heard anywhere, and many of them at present hold high positions in the great musical centres. Where are they now? Mr. S. P. Warren is organist of Grace Church, New York; Mr. G. Lejeune is organist of St. John's Chapel, New York; Mr. Barnes is organist of Trinity Church, New York; Mr. Torrington is organist of the Metropolitan Church, Toronto; Mr. Harrison is organist of Christ Church, Ottawa; and Dr. Davies goes to St. George's Cathedral, Kingston. All these gentlemen were at one time resident in this city, and would, we presume, have stayed here had they received proper encouragement, failing which they have gone where their talents are appreciated. If we look at the salaries paid to church organists in this city, and compare them with the amounts drawn by these gentlemen in New York and elsewhere, we will understand clearly why it is that Montreal can't keep her musicians.

THE annual examination of the Quebec (Provincial) Academy of Music was held on the 3rd instant in the Mechanics' Hall, Montreal, when diplomas in the different branches of musical education were granted to a number of candidates.

THE second of the series of Orchestral Promenade Concerts will be given in the Victoria Skating Rink on Thursday the 17th instant. Miss Gertrude Franklin has been re-engaged, and an excellent programme of orchestral music has been prepared. We hope to see the Rink well filled on this occasion.

"PINAFORE" is being performed by church choirs all over New England, but the expression "Damme," as uttered by *Captain Corcoran*, is changed to "Hang it," and in the last act, instead of vowing that he will hardly ever be "untrue" to *Little Buttercup*, he says "unkind." In this form the piece is considered safe.

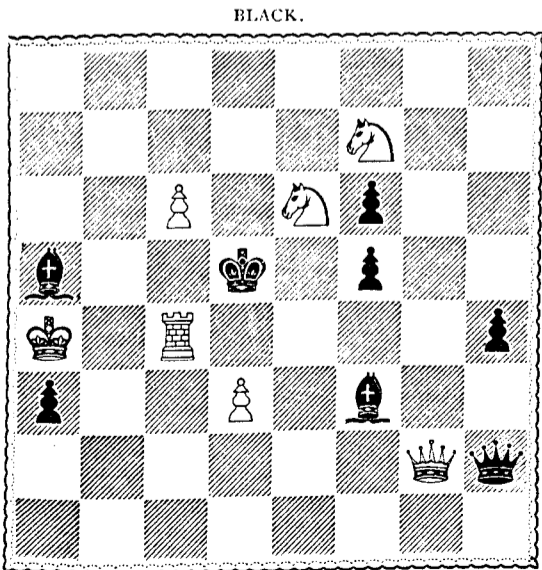
Chess.

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

Montreal, July 12th, 1879.

PROBLEM NO. XXIX.

By Messrs. J. P. Taylor and W. T. Pierce. From the *Brighton Herald*.



WHITE.

White to play and mate in two moves.

SOLUTION TO PROBLEM NO. XXVI.—Q to R 6.

Correct solution received from J.W.S.—"No duals; a very subtle problem"; Pax.

THE GAME OF CHESS.

MARCUS HIERONYMUS VIDA, the author of the following poem, was born in Cremona in the year 1480, and died at Alba, in Piedmont, in 1566. To encourage his poetic talent, Pope Leo X. gave him the priory of San Silvestro at Frascati, and Clement VII. made him Bishop of Alba. He wrote the "Life of Christ" in verse, after the style of Virgil, which gained him the name of the "Christian Virgil," also a poem on "The Silkworm," and some Eclogues. He is, however, better known by the poem on "The Game of Chess," which was written in the year 1540. It was at once translated into Italian by Mutoni, 1544; and Giambattista Verci, in his "Letters on Chess," says was turned into English verse by James Rowbottom in 1562. The writer is not aware that any copy of that translation is extant. It was translated by W. Erskine in 1736, who dedicated it to the Duke of Marlborough, and in the same year by George Jeffreys. In 1750 the Rev. Sam. Pullen made an excellent translation, and in 1786 Arthur Murphy, a no less beautiful one. Several other translations have been made, but these are the best known. It is believed that Pope was largely indebted to this classical production for the embellishments which adorn his description of a game of cards in his "Rape of the Lock," and in his "Essay on Criticism" his admiration of Vida is evinced by the couplet:

"Immortal Vida! on whose honoured brow
The poet's bays and critic's ivy grow."

Warton, in his "Essay on Pope," writes: "It was a happy chance to write a poem on Chess; nor is the execution less happy. The various stratagems and manifold intricacies of this ingenious game, so difficult to describe in Latin, are here expressed with the greatest perspicuity and eloquence; so that, perhaps, the game might be learned from this description." The poem consisted originally of 760 lines and is divided into five cantos.

CANTO I.

ARGUMENT.—The subject proposed; a mimic war between two imaginary nations. The kings contend for glory. Invocation to the nymphs of the river Serio. Origin of the game of chess. Neptune's marriage. Jupiter, with the other deities, attends the nuptial feast. Neptune, after dinner, to amuse the company, produces a chessboard. Description of a chessboard. Neptune makes a speech. He produces the chessmen. Description of the men, their number, their colour, and their several functions. The two armies are drawn up in order of battle. The several stations of the combatants assigned. The kings, the queens, the archers, the cavalry, the elephants and the infantry are all described. The laws of war are explained, and the various movements of the combatants set forth with precision. Jupiter recollects the consequences of party and faction among the gods, and how Olympus had been shaken by the animosity of the leaders. He enjoins a strict neutrality. Apollo and Mercury are appointed to play the game. The choice of their different sides is left to themselves, and, to excite their ardour, ample gifts are promised as a reward to the victor.

Fantastic scenes of mimic war I sing,
Contending heroes, and a routed king;
How to mock realms, their glory to maintain,
Mar hal their squadrons on the chequer'd plain;
Ye blue ey'd nymphs, that haunt the flow'ry meads,
Where his soft stream the silver Serio leads,
And knit in dance along the margin green,
Charm with melodious airs the sylvan scene;
Celestial maids, attend; the theme display,
The mighty theme, unknown to poet's lay.
Old Ocean burn'd of yore with warm desire,
Not all his sea could quench the ardent fire:
The nymph he woo'd, and to his arms for life
At length receiv'd a constant, virtuous wife,
Fair Amphitrite her name; to grace the feast,
Jove deign'd to visit him, a humble guest.
Adown he march'd to Ethiopia's plain;
The lesser deities attend his train.
With genial mirth the sprightly jest went round;
With genial mirth the wide stretch'd shores resound.
Soon as the banquet ceas'd, the hours to kill,
The bridegroom meditates with eager skill,
A board he brings, whose well contrasted dye
Presents a chequer'd object to the eye.
Sixty and four small squares, in equal rows,
Rank'd eight by eight, a larger square compose;
Of equal size each small quadrangle's seen,
But colours differing variegate the scene:
A milky white succeeds to jetty black,
Like tints that vary on the tortoise' back.
Then Ocean thus—th' attentive gods give ear:
"Behold the seat of desolation drear;
The hostile field, where oft, with dire alarms,
Contending nations meet in adverse arms.
The war's whole art, if e'er the watery plains
In calm subside, and grateful stillness reign,
In their cool grots the herds, pleas'd, survey,
While unperceiv'd the minutes glide away."
He said, and straight from his inverted urn
Th' imprison'd heroes on the tables turn.
Sup'rior strength on neither side they boast;
But sixteen combatants in either host.
Here the white troops their glittering falchions wield;
There the black legions darken all the field.
By different paths they urge their way to fame,
Nor differ more in feature than in name.
In regal state two monarchs first appear;
With these, their queens rush on, devoid of fear.
On foot, some boldly to th' attack advance,
And some on horseback shake the glittering lance.
Amidst the charging hosts some boast the art
From the bent bow to aim the missive dart;
Ev'n elephants attend the martial train,
Add horror to the war, and tow'r along the plain.
And now, from either camp, in just array,
Pour forth the nations, eager for the fray.
Deep in the rear, far as the utmost line,
From dangers safe the way monarchs shine;
On the fourth tract, six squares between they stand;
The Moor on white, the foe on sable land.
Not so the queens; to please the female mind,
Congenial colours are to these assigned;
With their complexions such as just agree,
And woman's vanity e'en here we see.
Around their lords with anxious care they cling,
One leads the right, and one the adverse wing.
Next, two white archers boldly take their post;
Intrepid warriors all! to danger train'd,
And fam'd for laurels in the combat gained.
The troopers next in radiant vest appear,
Their haughty crests high curling in the air;
Two on each side bound o'er the chequer'd board,
And brave the fury of the slaughter'ring sword.
In either wing, far as the verge o' th' field,
The warlike elephants their castles wield.
Amidst the ranks they move in martial state,
And the earth labours with the cumbersome weight.
Next, eight foot-combatants their strength combine,
And form their phalanx on the second line;
One half the king's own regiment compose.
And half, a virgin train, their queens enclose.
'Tis theirs, 'midst scenes of death, in armour bright,
To march, and foremost to provoke the fight.
The troops thus rang'd, again the god proceeds;
"Now, see, immortals, what heroic deeds,
What wars I promis'd, and what dire alarms,
And learn what rules control each nation's arms.
First, then, the monarchs, with alternate sway,
Detach some chosen hero to the fray;
And, if a warrior of the sable host,
Straight a white champion issues from his post.
Ne'er in whole squadrons are they known to advance,
But man by man they brave the hostile lance.
One gen'ral aim each private soldier knows;
One common purpose in each bosom glows—
The adverse monarch to encompass round,
And seize each apt advantage of the ground,
To bar his passage with their monarch's life
The conquer'd nation ends the doubtful strife.
"But ere to fate the king beleagu'er'd yield,
An iliad rises on the chequer'd field
O'er the wide plain rage, death, and terror fly;
By turns the heroes conquer, or they die.

The ranks are thin'd by the wide-wasting sword,
And carnage desolates the painted board;
Each hapless combatant, that falls in fight,
Meets in the hostile camp sepulchral rote;
While the brave youth, who gave the deadly blow,
Seizes the station of the slaughter'd foe;
There, if for once no mortal stroke he meet,
The hero then may seek a safe retreat.
"But the foot soldiers, an ignoble race,
The laws forbid their footsteps to retrace;
The war's whole art against their wily foe,
By different modes, the rival nations show.
In a straight line the infantry advance
From square to square, and stand the doubtful chance;
But when to war their first approach they make,
A double space they bravely then may take;
And if enrag'd they aim the deathful wound,
Sidelong they walk, the party-colour'd ground—
Across the angle of each square they tread,
And heap the plain with mountains of the dead.
The elephants right onward move, and to and fro
Their castles bear against the trembling foe.
Far as the limits of the plain you spy,
On ev'ry side without control they fly.
O'er all the ranks the ruthless monster bounds;
The groaning earth beneath his hoofs resounds.
But never angrier they move along,
With pace unwieldy, through the combat'd throng.
That way the archers scour along the field,
And bid their arrows pierce the sev'nfold shield.
On a white line one ever tries his force,
Through a black track the other drives his course.
Ne'er from this movement are they known to change,
But, thus impell'd, the paths of war they range.
"The neighing steed, indignant of the rein,
Paws and insults the party-colour'd plain.
In a straight line the horse ne'er rush to arms,
But prance and curvet 'midst the dire alarms;
Forming a semicircle, spring with pride
Over two squares, and through the battle ride;
And if on sable land they wait the foe,
On a white station next they aim the blow.
By these fix'd laws the cavalry is bound,
And thus they change the colour of their ground.
"With soul all up in arms, with martial rage
Inflamed, the queens a dreadful combat wage;
From right to left, through the thick war they fly,
And where they rush the vanquish'd legions die.
Back on the rear with martial rage they turn,
Or in the van with tenfold fury burn.
Sometimes obliquely 'cross each square they go;
Nor bound nor limit doth their course know;
Through ev'ry path they seek the trembling foe;
Unless some warrior, raging in the fray,
Prevent the heroine, and obstruct her way.
But o'er the ranks to bound they ne'er prepare;
The cavalry alone thus wage the war.
"In the fierce shock, with less impetuous rage,
The scepter'd rulers of each realm engage;
The father of his people each! on him the fate
Of war depends, and glory of the state.
While he survives, they meet the raging strife,
Firm patriots all, and prodigal of life.
But if their monarch fall, in battle slain,
They sheath the sword, and, drooping, quit the plain.
If the foe near him stand, by honour sway'd,
He sends him headlong to the Stygian shade;
On ev'ry side inflicts his rage at will:
His high prerogative is sacred still.
His first step knows no bound. That motion o'er,
A free career—the laws allow no more.
From square to square with caution he proceeds,
The public weal inspiring all his deeds,
Whether unstain'd with blood he walk the plain,
Or hurl the foe to Pluto's gloomy reign.
"These are their manners, these their ancient laws;
Now, view them warring in the public cause."
Thus Ocean spake—the cloud-compelling sire,
In his capacious mind, the revolving how the ire
Of adverse nations sets all heav'n in arms,
Till high Olympus shake with dire alarms,
The heav'nly synod from his seat address'd,
And spoke the thoughts deep rolling in his breast,
He wails that unimpassion'd all forbear
To aid the strife, or mingle in the war;
On ev'ry mind strikes reverential awe,
And gives his will the sanction of a law.
Then he selects to guide the mimic fray,
Unshorn Apollo, and the son of May,
Fair blooming Mercury; not yet the god
Had wav'd the wonders of the magic rod;
Nor yet his golden pinions dar'd to try,
Through worlds and worlds, along the liquid sky;—
Nor yet Apollo, through the heav'nly way,
Guided the chariot of the garish day;
Distinguish'd only by his graceful air,
The well stor'd quiver, and the golden hair,
Jove to their skill commits the martial train,
And all the labours of the vast campaign;
He adds the pow'r to choose their different sides,
As fancy dictates, or as judgment guides;
With bright reward each gen'rous chief inspires,
And their young breasts with love of glory fires.
(To be continued.)