

Musical.

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

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.

MUSIC IN MONTREAL.

That the people of Montreal are not musical can hardly be maintained in the face of facts. Scarcely a church service, public entertainment, or even a political meeting, can be made thoroughly successful unless a certain amount of music be introduced, and a free piano or organ recital is invariably largely attended.

Why, then, it may be asked, do we hear the stereotyped expression after every entertainment given in this city, no matter by whom: Artistic success; financial failure? The Philharmonic concerts have been given in different buildings, with programmes of varied style and arrangement, under four different conductors, and the result, in one respect at least, has always been the same. Oh, it is said, the Philharmonic is too expensive for the masses, and they do not care for classical music! Well, the Ballad concert recently given consisted of popular music, and the best seat in the house only cost twenty-five cents, and yet there were not two hundred persons present. We do not think it is in the recollection of any Agent or Manager that he has given a successful musical performance in Montreal, unless his entertainment were bolstered up with a sympathetic appeal for some indigent institution altogether unconnected with music.

If we turn to the field of the teacher of music we will find that here, too, a fortune (and in some cases a bare subsistence) is hardly to be made. Pupils there are in abundance, but at the rates current at present a teacher would need to labour incessantly from Monday morning till Saturday night in order to save a dollar.

In churches, again, we find good musicians in constant demand both as organists and vocalists, the criticisms being loud and frequent if their performances do not come up to a standard. Our congregations as a rule are not wanting in taste, and the importance of having good music is recognized as being little less than that of engaging a first-class preacher; yet when we come to salaries we find that the minister receives about *six times as much* as the organist, and several times as much as all the members of the choir combined. We do not grudge the ministers their salaries (indeed, many of them are none too well paid), but we do think that the majority of our organists and singers are vastly underpaid, being treated precisely in the same measure as the teachers and concert-soloists.

Now, to state precisely the reason for all this, much less to prescribe a remedy, would be difficult indeed. There are doubtless many conditions which combine to perpetuate this deplorable state of affairs. In the first place, we think the fault lies with the musicians themselves; many of them are so ready to sing or play on every occasion that the public, having frequent opportunity of hearing them gratis, can hardly be expected to pay for what ceases to be a privilege. Then concert-givers, in order to fill their houses, and create fictitious reports of their success, frequently give away a large number of complimentary tickets, and the public having once become recipients of these, await them on every occasion, sometimes becoming so satiated with free performances that even free tickets become a drug. The principal reason, however, why professional performances are so uniformly unsuccessful is that every church, hospital or other institution has its "Grand Concert," to which all charitable people are importuned to go, not to hear the music, but for the benefit of the charity. So common has this practice become, that on the announcement of a concert appearing in the newspapers, the first question invariably is: What institution is it for? The idea of voluntarily entering a ticket office no more enters the heads of the majority of our people than that of going of their own free will to take out a life-insurance policy.

The prevalence of low rates for tuition, we think, springs from a low estimate of artistic work of any kind as compared with substantial services. McDonald Senior learnt to sing fifty years ago at a dollar a lesson, and he cannot understand why McDonald Junior should pay any more, the difference between the teachers never coming into his calculations. Of course in London or Paris he is willing to give four or even five dollars, but should a Parisian teacher settle in Montreal, thinking he could obtain the same rates here, we are afraid he would soon find that he had made a mistake. This want of confidence in everything Canadian is, we are happy to say, dying out, and we imagine that before long our citizens will have their children educated at home, and that good teachers will be able to command fair remuneration.

With respect to organists, we think we need say little; congregations are beginning to demand music of the highest order, and if the better class of organists shew sufficient respect for themselves we have no doubt that within a comparatively short time they will be placed (financially) on a better footing. Musicians here have worked too much on an amateur footing, and done too much simply for the love of their art, and their services are consequently not valued as they are in other cities of the same size and importance. Let them keep aloof from all except professional performances, allowing the amateurs to do their labour of love, and let the latter, instead of giving public performances which militate against the profession, help and assist all artists to remain here and educate the people to a proper appreciation of their performances.

SPOHR ON NEWSPAPER CRITICS.

Another of Spohr's Parisian experiences was the reverse of satisfactory. He gave a concert at the Grand-Opéra, and won the applause of the public both for his music and his playing in a new violin concerto. But, to the master's astonishment, the press took a different line with him, and this "riddle" he solves as follows: "Previous to every first appearance in public, whether of a foreigner or a native, these gentlemen of the press are accustomed to receive a visit from him to solicit a favourable judgment, and to present them most obsequiously with a few admission tickets. Foreign artists, to escape these unpleasant visits, sometimes forward their solicitations in writing only, and the free admissions at the same time; or, as is of frequent occurrence, induce some family to whom they have brought letters of introduction, to invite the gentlemen of the press to dinner, when a more convenient opportunity is offered to give them to understand what is desirable to have said of them both before and after the concert. How the opinions of a press so purchasable are at all respected, I cannot understand. Suffice it, I did not pay any supplicatory visits, for I considered them unworthy of a German artist, and thought that the worst that could happen would be that the journalists would not take any notice of my concert at all."—*Bennett's Life of Spohr.*

Chess.

Montreal, December 18th, 1880.

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

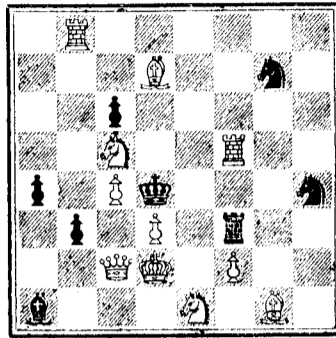
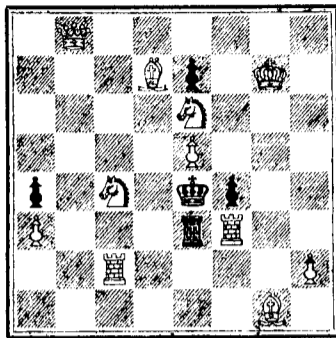
FIRST PRIZE PROBLEMS IN La Nature PROBLEM TOURNEY.

PROBLEM NO. CXV.

PROBLEM NO. CXVI.

MOTTO: "Le devoir avant tout."
BLACK.

MOTTO: "Timor judicii, principium judicii."
BLACK.



WHITE.

WHITE.

White to play and mate in two moves.

White to play and mate in two moves.

CHESS INTELLIGENCE.

To the Chess Editor CANADIAN SPECTATOR:

DEAR SIR,—You have done me the honour to refer to me a point in connection with the fifty move law of chess.

I have no hesitation in expressing my opinion that the fifty-move limit can only be claimed when the position is such as to lead to an endless repetition of the same moves or line of play. And it is intended to prevent a vexatious continuation of a game, which from the number and position of the pieces, is in its nature drawn.

At the meeting of the British Chess Association at Leamington, in 1855, a committee was appointed to confer with Mr. Staunton as to the revision of the laws of the game. This committee consisted of Messrs. Lowenthal, Ingleby, Wayte and myself. We held a number of meetings at the St. George's Chess Club rooms, and the fifty-move law formed part of the discussion. It was never for a moment supposed that the law had any reference to the beginning or middle of the game, but only to such positions as R against Kt, R and Kt or B against R, or Bishop's of dissimilar colour, &c. Subsequently when Herr Von der Lasa published his pamphlet on the laws of the game, such points were raised as to whether, after the fifty moves had been called and a piece taken, the counting should not begin again. Also whether sixty moves would not be a fairer number than fifty, because in such a position as two Knights against Queen, one of the Kts may be captured at the 45th or a later move, and the Q may not be able to mate within the fifty, but if sixty were allowed she could do so.

So also the fifty-move call ought not to be allowed in many cases where pawns help to make up the position, seeing that their presence would be likely to prevent a repetition of the same moves backwards and forwards to no purpose, for it was to put a limit to this senseless proceeding that the law was enacted.

In the article CHESS, contributed by me, to the English Cyclopædia (Arts and Sciences Division) the law is thus stated:—"XXII. If a player remain at the end of the game with a Rook and a Bishop against a Rook with both Bishops only, with Knight and Bishop only, &c., he must checkmate his adversary in fifty moves on each side at most, or the game will be considered as drawn; the fifty moves to commence from the time when the adversary gives notice that he will count them. This law holds good for all other checkmates of pieces only such as Q or R only, Q against a R," &c., &c.

The only ground that I can imagine for the decision arrived at by the Conductor of the Hamilton Chess Club Tourney is to be found in Staunton's Praxis, p. 21, "and whenever one player considers that one side can force the game * * * he has the right of submitting the case to the umpire or bystanders, who shall decide whether it is one for the fifty-move counting." But, taking this certainly unguarded remark, in conjunction with the context, the decision is, in my judgment, entirely opposed to the principle on which the law rests.

At the Leamington meeting, above referred to, a curious question arose involving a point similar to that in the question now before us. Deputies from the Worcester and Kidderminster Clubs were playing a consultation game at different tables and the moves were entered on a printed slip supplied by the Association, which one side as soon as a move had been entered, handed over to the other side. About the middle of the game it happened that doubled R's opposed doubled R's, and the player who handed the slip over to the other side, said, "R takes R, of course," but by some blunder the entry on the slip was "R to K," whereby a clear R was lost, and consequently the game. The losing party claimed its right to amend the clerical error, on the ground of the spoken message. This not being allowed, an independent committee, consisting of Messrs. Staunton, Kennedy, Lowenthal and Falkbeer was appointed, and the decision was, rightly as I think, that both sides were bound by the written slip, and by that only.

Another curious point which I submitted to the Laws' Committee at the St. George's Club refers to "P takes P en passant." I set up the following position:—

BLACK.



WHITE.

and put the question whether in order to escape a stale-mate, the second player could be compelled to take the P en passant. In this position, White having to play, advances the Kt's Pawn two squares, whereupon Black calls out "stale-mate!" "No!" returns White, "You can take the P en passant." But that is at my option," says Black, "it is a purely voluntary move, and I don't choose to make it." In this contention, I hold Black to be in the right, and the definition of a stale-mate to be faulty. "A stale-mate is when a player, whose K is not in check, and whose turn it is to play, has no move except such as would put his K in check." Strictly, Black may by this law be compelled to violate another law, by which the capture of the Pawn is purely a matter of choice. Hence it seems to me that the definition of stale-mate requires some amendment.

I must apologise for introducing into this letter other matters that are not in the position; but you must expect much talk when you once set an old chess player going.

With best wishes,
I remain, Dear Sir,

Faithfully yours,

Charles Tomlinson, F.R.S.

Highgate, near London, N., 24th November, 1880.