

BEATRICE CENCI.

It is almost a pity, writes James Jackson Jarves, in the Independent to destroy the current belief regarding the tragedy of Beatrice Cenci and the authenticity of the portrait assigned to her in the Barberini Gallery at Rome. For centuries the myth has captivated the imaginations and inspired the pens not merely of susceptible youths of both sexes, but of poets and scholars, until the sad story and the beautiful lineaments of one who was considered more a victim than a criminal had become in all appearance fixed facts in the history and hearts of mankind at large. In one sense it is doleful to wipe out an illusion that not only added an emphatic interest even to Rome itself, furnished one of the most cherished sights, gave an immeasurable sentimental halo to a distinguished old master, and excited mingled pity and admiration for the hard fate of a lovely girl of only sixteen years of age, of one of the noblest families, driven by the incestuous violence of a monster of a father to defend her honor by conniving at his murder, as the sole remedy for an existence made intolerable by his unnatural crimes and brutality.

It is unnecessary to repeat the well-known tale which has been embodied by Guerrazzi in his novel of Francesco Cenci, the very horror of the realistic details of which, although perhaps not exaggerating the criminal license of the period, have always been too repulsive to recommend the book to Anglo-Saxon readers in general, however disposed they might be, in viewing the so-styled portrait of Beatrice Cenci on the walls of the Barberini Palace, to accept her piteous story in the main as pictured by the novelist and current tradition for absolute truth, and give loose rein to their sympathies, in consequence. Alas! Signor Bertolotti has unearthed facts and documents that rudely shatter the fabric of our imaginations out of all sympathetic shape and utterly spoil the portrait-link in the romance. This alone leaves the rest of it worse off than Hamlet would be, played without the Prince of Denmark.

In the outset, Bertolotti clearly shows that Francesco Cenci, the father, was simply the average noble scoundrel of his ungodly race and time, and not the grotesque, irrepressible demon of later invention, whose portrait we owe chiefly to the one-sided plea of the lawyer of Beatrice in his defence of her crime. The devil was black enough as he was; but the blacker he could be made the better chances of an extenuating verdict for his murderers. Where all were so immoral, according to our ideas, there does not seem to have been much choice in goodness in the Cenci family. As with the age, it was among them a question who should win their ends, by fair or foul means, unhindered by conscientious scruples of any kind, and, perhaps, unmindful of possible consequences, in their eagerness of criminal self-indulgence. Nurtured in so foul an atmosphere, what else could have been expected of any child? And, although it was known that Francesco owed his death to his wife and children, yet such was family influence and the public detestation of the father that the order for the trial was reluctantly given by the Pope, and then only when both parricide and matricide were becoming so rife in Rome in noble families that public examples of their punishment were required in the interests of society and the safety of parents in general. The accused were tortured to extort confession, as was the legal custom; but in prison were treated with an indulgence in regard to diet the reverse of modern practice. The records of the Castle of San Angelo, where they were imprisoned, give their daily bill of fare and expense of same. It included cakes, fruit, fish, salad, iced wine, etc.; certainly a style of living incompatible with the noisome dungeons and frightful lacerations of limbs of the story-books.

Beatrice disposed of her property by will as she pleased, and, singularly enough, it was found by a sealed codicil opened 35 years after her death, that she left in trust a certain sum for the benefit of an infant, which it would seem must have been her own. Much of her father's severity in imprisoning her and otherwise is now supposed to have been done to put some restraint on her own immoralities. Instead of being sweet sixteen, she was upward of twenty-one years old, and, despite her large fortune, does not seem to have been good or beautiful enough to have been married, if negative testimony can be admitted in this connection.

So much for Beatrice, the innocent victim herself! Now for her portrait. She was executed in A. D. 1599. There is no record of Guido Reni in Rome before 1608, nine years after her death. Consequently, he could not have painted her, and the pretty, touching legend of the prison scene is mere moonshine. In the catalogue of the Barberini pictures, drawn up in 1604, although other portraits and painters are mentioned, nothing is said of one by Guido, or any one else, of Beatrice. Would so important a picture or artist have been omitted? One painting is recorded by Paola da Verona of a Madonna costumed in the Egyptian manner. The girlish, round face and odalisque head dress of the so-styled Beatrice, concealing her hair; the whole a bizarre costume and arrangement very unlike any prison possibilities of toilette and condition, and which point to the work of Paola da Verona. Even as a Madonna it would agree with the forced rococo taste of his time, or an artistic caprice quite foreign to any sacred sentiment. Possibly it was a study for some other purpose, and as is common in catalogues, was baptized a Madonna as the easiest name at hand to call it. The pic-

ture is an enigma in any case, and there seems no likelihood of any certain clue to it being discovered other than the old catalogues if this be one. Its history is a striking example of the effect of the imagination of the spectator, as moved by sentiments outside of artistic elements, in investing a work of art with apocryphal merits and history. Some fine works, now rarely noticed, only require like sympathetic strokes of fancy to uncover their hidden merits and make them famous; while there are not a few, still brightly shining in borrowed lights of invention and fancy, with really little to recommend them beside, having been pushed to the front by chances as inexplicable and as strange, if less tragical, as those of the would-be Beatrice Cenci, by Guido Reni.

OUR CHESS COLUMN.

Solutions to Problems sent in by Correspondents will be duly acknowledged.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. W. S., Montreal.—Accept our thanks for several valuable communications. Student, Montreal.—Solution of Problem No. 186 received. Correct. J. G., Seaforth.—Letter received. Many thanks. H. H., Montreal.—Solution of Problem for Young Players No. 185 received. Correct. B., Montreal.—The game is not forgotten. It shall appear shortly.

THE DOMINION CHESS ASSOCIATION CONGRESS.

The seventh Annual Congress of the Dominion Chess Association was held at the Gymnasium, Mansfield Street, Montreal, on Tuesday, August 2nd, and following days.

At the usual preliminary meeting, the following gentlemen entered their names as competitors in the Tourney:—Dr. H. A. Howe, Prof. Hicks, Mr. H. von Bokum, Mr. J. Henderson, Mr. A. Saunders, Mr. J. G. Ascher, Mr. W. Bond, Mr. J. White, of Quebec; Mr. W. A. Atkinson, Mr. T. M. Issett, Mr. J. W. Shaw, Dr. Loverin and Mr. E. B. Holt, of Quebec.

There were only two entries for the Problem Tourney and the competitors generously offered to withdraw their names on condition that the amount set aside for the best problems should be applied to increase the amount of each prize in the Game Tourney. This led to an arrangement by which five prizes were ultimately decided upon, as follows:—First prize, \$40; second, \$30; third, \$20; fourth, \$10; and fifth, \$5.

The following regulations, which had been proposed the evening before by the Managing Committee, were submitted to those entering the Tourney and agreed to:— Each competitor to play one game with every other competitor.

The competitor scoring the largest number of games to take the first prize; the competitor scoring the next largest number the second prize, and in the same order with the rest of the prizes.

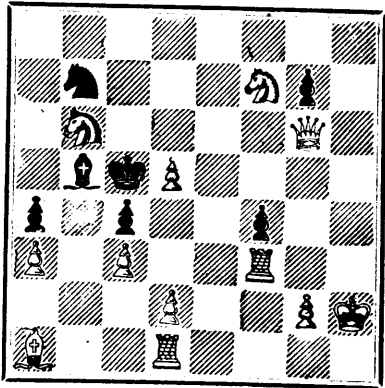
A draw to count half a game to each player. The rules as laid down in Staunton's Chess Praxis to regulate the play, and the time limit to be 15 moves to an hour.

Play commenced on Tuesday afternoon, at 3 p.m., and continued throughout the rest of the week. The usual excitement attending a contest of this nature was manifested, and it was pleasing to perceive by the large attendance of visitors every afternoon and evening that much interest in the noble game exists in Montreal. It would be impossible in the limited space allowed us to give the results of each day's play. At the time of going to press, more than half the whole number of games had been played, but still it was difficult to say who among the competitors were likely to take the chief prizes. We trust to be able in our next Column to give the final results.

PROBLEM No. 189.

First Prize Problem in the British Chess Association Tourney of 1861.

By F. HEALEY. BLACK.



WHITE. White to play and mate in three moves.

GAME 288TH.

Played between Messrs. Shaw and Bond at the Seventh Annual Congress of the Dominion Chess Association, held at Montreal, August, 1878.

(King's Knight's Opening.)

- WHITE.—(Mr. J. W. Shaw.) BLACK.—(Mr. W. Bond.) 1. P to K 4 1. P to K 4 2. Kt to K B 3 2. P to Q 3 3. P to Q 4 3. P takes P 4. B to Q B 4 4. B to K 2 5. Kt takes P 5. Kt to K B 3 6. Kt to Q B 3 6. Castles 7. Castles 7. Kt to K 5 8. P to K R 3 8. K to K 4 9. B to K 3 9. P to Q R 3 10. P to B 4 10. K Kt to Q B 3 11. Kt from B 3 to K 2 11. B to B 3 12. P to B 3 12. Q to K 2 13. B to B 2 13. B to K 3 14. Kt to K Kt 3 14. B to B 5 15. R to B 3 15. P to K Kt 3 16. P to Kt 3 16. B takes Kt (ch) 17. P takes K B 17. B to K 3 18. P to Q 5 18. B to Q 2 (a) 19. P takes Kt 19. B takes B P 20. B to Kt 2 20. Kt to Q 2 21. Q to Q 4 21. P to B 3 22. R to K sq 22. Q R to K sq 23. P to Kt 4 23. P to R 3 24. Kt to B sq 24. K to R 2 25. R to K Kt 3 25. P to B 4 (b) 26. P takes P 26. Q takes R 27. Q mates

NOTES.

(a) The loss of a piece cannot be avoided, but (18) Q to B 3, threatening the Rook would have given Black the offset of at least an extra pawn. (b) Giving White an opportunity which is decisive of the game.

GAME 289TH.

Played between Messrs. von Bokum and Holt, at the Seventh Annual Congress of the Dominion Chess Association, held at Montreal, August, 1878. (Irregular Opening.)

- WHITE.—(Von Bokum.) BLACK.—(Holt) 1. P to K 4 1. P to Q 4 2. P takes P 2. Kt to K B 3 3. P to Q 4 3. Kt takes P 4. P to Q B 4 4. Kt to K B 3 5. Kt to K B 3 5. B to B 4 6. Kt to B 3 6. P to K 3 7. P to Q R 3 7. P to K R 3 8. B to K 2 8. B to K 2 9. P to K R 3 9. Castles 10. B to K 3 10. Kt to K 5 11. Kt takes Kt 11. B takes Kt 12. Castles 12. P to Q B 3 13. B to Q 3 13. B takes Kt 14. Q takes B 14. P to K B 4 15. Q R to Q sq (a) 15. Kt to Q 2 16. P to Q 5 16. B P takes P 17. P takes P 17. P to B 5 (b) 18. Q to K 4 18. Kt to B 3 19. Q takes P (ch) 19. K to R sq 20. B takes B P 20. Kt takes P 21. Q to K Kt 6 21. Kt to B 3 22. B takes R P (c) 22. P takes B 23. Q takes P (ch) 23. K to Kt sq 24. B to B 4 (ch) 24. Resigns.

NOTES.

(a) The correct move, as the sequel shows. (b) Overlooking White's powerful move of Q to K 4, which must win. (c) And Black's game is hopeless.

GAME 290TH.

Played between Messrs. White and Howe, at the Seventh Annual Congress of the Dominion Chess Association, held at Montreal, August, 1878. (Giucoco Piano.)

- WHITE.—(Mr. White.) BLACK.—(Dr. Howe.) 1. P to K 4 1. P to K 4 2. Kt to K B 3 2. Kt to Q B 3 3. B to Q B 4 3. P to K R 3 4. Kt to Q B 3 4. B to Q B 4 5. P to Q 3 5. P to Q 3 6. P to K R 3 6. Kt to K B 3 7. B to K 3 7. B to Q Kt 3 8. B takes B 8. R P takes B 9. Castles 9. Castles 10. B to K 2 10. B to K 3 11. B to Q Kt 3 11. Kt to K R 2 12. Q to Q 2 12. Q to Q 2 13. K to R 2 13. P to K B 4 14. P takes P 14. B takes B 15. R P takes B 15. R takes R 16. R takes R 16. Q takes P 17. K to K Kt 3 17. Q to K B 2 18. K to Kt sq 18. Kt to K B 3 19. R to R 4 19. Kt to Q 4 20. R to K Kt 4 20. Kt to K B 5 21. Kt to K R 4 21. Kt to K 2 22. Kt to K 4 22. P to Q 4 23. Kt to Q B 3 23. P to Q B 3 24. R to K Kt 3 24. Q to K B 3 25. Kt to K B 3 25. Kt to K B 4 26. R to Kt 4 26. Kt to Q 3 27. Kt to K R 2 27. P to K R 4 28. R to Kt 3 28. Kt to K B 4 29. R to K B 3 29. Q to K Kt 4 30. R takes Kt 30. Q takes R 31. Q takes Q 31. P takes Q 32. Kt to K B 3 32. R to K sq 33. K to K B 3 33. Kt to Q 3 34. Kt to K 2 34. R to K B sq 35. Kt at K 2 to Q 4 35. P to Q Kt 3 36. K to K 2 36. Kt to K B 4 37. Kt takes Kt 37. R takes Kt 38. P to Q 4 38. K to B 2 39. K to Q 3 39. K to K 3 40. P to K R 4 40. K to Q 3 41. P to Q Kt 4 41. R to K B 3 42. P to Q Kt 3 42. R to K Kt 3 43. Kt to K Kt 5 43. R takes Kt 44. P takes R 44. K to K 3 45. Kt to K 2 45. K to B 4 46. K to B 3 46. K takes P (a) 47. K to K 2 47. K to B 4 48. P to K B 3 48. K to Kt 4 49. K to B 2 49. K to R 5 50. P to Q B 4 50. P to K Kt 3 51. K to K sq 51. K to Kt 6 52. K to B sq 52. P to R 5 53. Resigns.

NOTES.

(a) And Black must win.

SOLUTIONS.

Solution of Problem No. 187. WHITE. BLACK. 1. Kt to K 2 1. Anything. 2. Mates accordingly

Solution of Problem for Young Players No. 185. WHITE. BLACK. 1. R to K B 8 (ch) 1. K to Kt 2 2. B to R 6 (ch) 2. K takes B 3. Mates

PROBLEMS FOR YOUNG PLAYERS, No. 186.

WHITE. BLACK. K at K R 2 K to K 6 R at K Kt 3 R at Kt 3 P at K 4 R at Q B 3 Kt at Q 3 Kt at K B 3 Pawns at Q 4 K B 4 and Q Kt 2 White to play and mate in three moves.

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