

Musical.

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

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

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.

OPERA.

This form of musical composition is said to have arisen from the Greek drama, which possessed, to some extent, the operatic character; the choral parts were sung and the dialogue delivered in measured tones, somewhat resembling our modern recitative. As Italy gave birth to all forms of musical composition, we are indebted to the Italian composers for the earliest operas of which we have record. The Italian opera of that time, however, was very different from that exemplified in the works of Donizetti and Bellini, being of a purely classical type, and more like our oratorio music. Handel is said to have adapted the music of some of his Italian operas to Scriptural language in order to complete his "Messiah," and one of his love-songs does duty as a "Sanctus" in many Episcopal churches. The works of Scarlatti, Porpora, Corelli and Cimarosa are now scarcely known even in name, and the modern Italian opera is rather a modification of the French school, of which the greatest exponents were the Italians—Cherubini and Rossini.

Down to the time of Gluck (1714), Italian models were used by composers of every nation. This intellectual musician, however, was not content to imitate certain conventional models, but set thoughtfully to work to see if the model itself could not be improved upon. He was induced to think on the subject mainly by the failure of the *Pyramus and Thisbe*, which was composed of scraps from several of his former compositions strung incoherently together; this was the *reductio ad absurdum* of the Italian method, and proved too much even for the uneducated public of the day. It served, however, to set him thinking, and to institute certain reforms in opera which resulted in a distinct German school, since improved upon by Meyerbeer, Weber, and Wagner, and copied to some extent by Gounod, Verdi, and others, till in our own day we find Italian opera, with its string of arias and cavatinas, on the wane, and a new school in process of development, in which the music is used to express the sentiments embodied in the words, and not merely written to show the voice of a Tenor, or to exhibit the vocalization of a prima donna.

Modern opera belongs to no country or clime, but its form seems to be agreed upon by all thoughtful musicians. It is a noticeable fact that as composers become experienced and enlightened they discard the conventional Italian style for a higher and more artistic form of composition. Wagner's later works bear no resemblance to those of his earlier manhood, and as for Verdi—that composer *par excellence* of popular Italian music—does not his *Aida* show that we live in a progressive age, and that music, like other arts, is becoming better and more fully understood? We can speak of "Ah che la morte," "Il balen," and "Stride la vampa," from *Trovatore*, but we can only mention and admire *Aida* as one great work, rich in melodic passages and exquisite modulations, the thematic treatment affording intellectual enjoyment to the cultured musician, and the whole being in harmony with the words; the latter also are far ahead of the senseless libretti of old-time Italian operas. We notice that popular taste, too, has improved. Lucia, Norma, and *Trovatore* are now only demanded by persons devoid of musical culture, or else by those who care to hear them for the sake of old associations. The operas now most in demand are "Carmen," "Faust," "Mignon," "Der Freyschutz," and "Les Huguenots," while a few of the advanced opera-goers revel in "Tannhauser," "Lohengrin," and "Aida." Mozart's operas will always hold their own on account of the merit of the various arias and concerted pieces they contain, but as art-works they are behind the age, being mere copies of the conventional Italian model.

Many excellent musicians consider opera of any kind a false form of art, and write in the form of oratorio, symphony, or cantata. Beethoven's fame rests not on his one opera, but on his nine immortal symphonies. Mendelssohn could not stoop to the conventionalities of the operatic stage, and so expended his mighty genius on oratorios, and Sullivan has, with masterly irony, burlesqued the whole range of opera in "Pinafore;" the trouble in this case is that the music is so good that many fail to see the irony intended, and take the whole as a serious attempt at composition. In modern opera individual excellence is less called for, the object being rather to obtain effect as a whole; orchestration is of more importance, and a good chorus is an essential element in every first-class organization. Scenery, too, plays an important part, and as much often depends on the setting of the stage as in the performance of the music. First-class representations of opera are unknown on the continent of America; the scenery is inadequate, the chorus small and inefficient, or the orchestra is unequal to the performance of the grandest compositions. Many of the scores are not procurable, and the public are treated to a weak arrangement instead of the original orchestration, yet we are advancing rapidly in many respects, and, now that American singers are in demand all over the world, we may hope that opera will be cultivated to a greater extent, and its adequate representation provided for.

LOCAL NEWS.

ENGLISH OPERA.—A word about Emma Abbott and her gigantic English Opera Company who are to appear at the Academy of Music on next Monday night. "She is," says the *St. John Globe*, "about the only Prima Donna on the American stage who is still in her twenties," and we opine that a comely-looking, bright, earnest, innocent face goes a wonderful way with an audience, when backed by a voice with as much sentiment and sympathy in its quality as even St. Pierre or Masse could desire. When she plays "Virginia," she is *Virginia* all over; when she enacts *Marguerite*, she is the realization of Gounod's dream of that character, and in the "Bohemian Girl" she is an ideal *Arline*. Tom Karl and Wm. Castle are admirable Tenors, well used to the stage, and "up" in their parts. Miss Stone is really a brilliant artiste, and Mrs. Seguin the acknowledged Contralto Queen in Opera. Every item—chorus, orchestra, stage management and scenery—is perfect, and success must follow the initial performance of "Paul and Virginia."

M. Couture gives a concert this week in Nordheimers' Hall, when Gounod's "Messe Solennelle" will be performed with full chorus and orchestra.

The first of Dr. MacLagan's orchestral concerts will be given early in December. Beethoven's second symphony will be performed in its entirety for the first time in Montreal.

Chess.

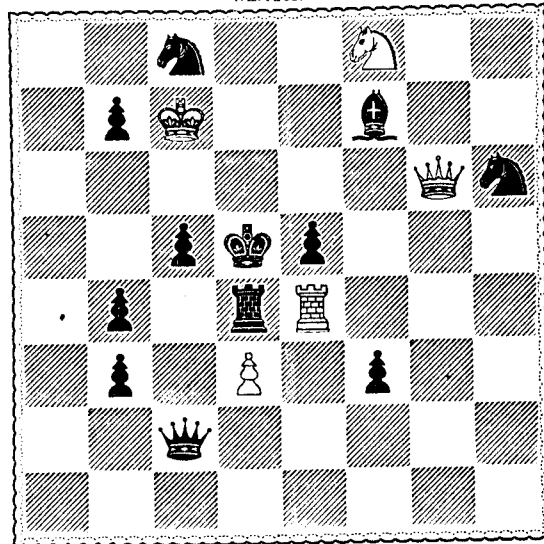
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Montreal, Nov. 8th, 1879.

PROBLEM NO. XLVI.

Special Prize Three Move Problem in Detroit Free Press Tourney. No. 4. Set No. 17. Motto: "Alea jacta est." Author, Nicolo Sardotsch of Trieste, Austria.

BLACK.



WHITE.

White to play and mate in three moves.

SOLUTION TO PROBLEM NO. XLIII.

White.	Black.	White.	Black.	White.
1. Kt to K 4	Q to K B 6	2 Q to K 3	Any	3 Q or Kt mates
	If P to K B 8 (Q)	2 Q to R sq	Any	3 Kt mates
	If Q takes P	2 Kt to Q B 3	B takes Kt	3 Q mates
	If K takes Kt	2 Q to K B 4 (ch)	K moves	3 Q takes B, mate

Correct solution received from T.M.J., W.H.P.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W.H.P.—Please send your address, which has been mislaid. Solutions to 44 and 45 are correct.

GAME NO. XLII.

Game in the West Gorman Tourney, played between Louis Paulsen and Herr A. Stern. (From Land and Water.)

FRENCH DEFENCE.

WHITE.	BLACK.	WHITE.	BLACK.	WHITE.	BLACK.
Paulsen.	Stern.	8 Kt to B 3	K Kt to K 2	16 B to Q 3	B takes Kt
1 P to K 4	P to K 3	9 Castles	Kt to B 4	17 R takes B	Kt to R 5
2 P to Q 4	P to Q 4	10 Kt to Q R 4	Q to Q sq	18 Kt takes Kt	Q takes Kt
3 P to K 4 (a)	P to Q B 4	11 P to Q R 3	B to K 2	19 P to B 4	K to K 2 (d)
4 P to Q B 3	Q to Kt 3	12 P to Q Kt 4	P to Q R 3	20 P to B 5	(1) R to Q B sq (e)
5 Kt to B 3	Kt to Q B 3	13 B to Kt 2	B to Q 2	21 P to Kt 3	Q to R 6 (f)
6 B to K 2	P takes P (h)	14 R to Q B sq	P to Q Kt 4 (c)	22 R to K B 4	and Black resigned.
7 P takes P	B to Kt 5 (ch)	15 Kt to B 5	P to R R 4		

NOTES.—(a) As every one knows this is a compromised continuation, and for that reason it is very seldom adopted. No doubt the second player ought to get the better game, but there is some scope for the display of superior strength on the other side.

(b) P to B 3 should be played.

(c) The adverse Kt is quite willing to obey this invitation.

(d) Black has a bad position; he would appear to have nothing better than P to Kt 3.

(e) Taking the Q P would cost a piece on account of P to Kt 3.

(f) This is fatal, but it is only precipitating the catastrophe.

CHESS INTELLIGENCE.

FIFTH AMERICAN CHESS CONGRESS.—The Regulations of the Problem Committee are published and are as follows:—

1. The Tournament will be free, and open to all the world.
2. Entries from composers residing in America will be received up to Feb. 1, 1880; from those residing in trans-oceanic countries, up to March 1st, 1880.
3. Each competitor will be allowed to enter one set of four original and unpublished problems, consisting of one problem in two moves, two problems in three moves, and one in four moves—all to be direct mates; suicidal and conditional problems will be excluded.
4. Each set must have a distinguishing motto; the problems to be on diagrams, and accompanied by full solutions; the name and address of each composer to be sent with each set, in a sealed envelope, which shall be indorsed with the motto of the set.
5. The following prizes will be given, viz.:—1st Prize, for the best set, \$100; 2nd Prize, for the second best set, \$50; 3rd Prize, for the third best set, \$25. A Special Prize, for the best single problem in the Tournament, offered by *The Turf, Field and Farm*, \$25. Other special prizes may be offered. All prizes will be paid in gold coin or its equivalent. Competing sets must be sent to Mr. F. M. Teed, No. 62 Liberty street, New York, so as to be received by him by the above-mentioned dates.

THE *Ayr Argus* has inaugurated a Problem Tourney which presents some novel features. The leading conditions are:—1. The competition is open to all Problem Composers. 2. Each competitor must post to the Chess Editor, *Argus and Express*, Ayr, Scotland, on or before the 15th January, 1880, a sealed envelope, containing 1st, one or two original problems in 2 or 3 moves—either 2 two-movers, 2 three-movers, or one of each—with full solutions; 2nd, the competitors name and address; 3rd, one shilling and sixpence of entry money—say 40 cents. 3. As soon as possible after Feb. 1st, the competing problems will be printed and sent to the competitors in the form of a book. 4. The prizes will be awarded by the votes of the competitors, each having one vote for the best two-mover, and one for the best three-mover. For the purpose of voting, dated voting papers will be sent along with the book of problems, and two months after the date of such voting papers, those that are returned shall be opened and the prizes awarded to the problems in two or three moves having the greatest number of votes. No competitor can vote for his own problems. 5. The prizes will be two silver medals, one for the best problem of each kind.

DELMAR VS. BARNES.—This match has been concluded. Score: Delmar, 7; Barnes, 4; drawn, 2. Another encounter on the same terms has been arranged.

MESSRS. BLACKBURN, ZUKERTORT, BIRD and MASON intend coming to the Congress, if they will be permitted to take part, and the prizes are sufficiently tempting. This we sincerely hope will be arranged. The presence of such chess leviathans would confer a lustre on the Congress which would make it one of the most memorable events in the chess world.