

Musical.

QUEEN'S HALL.

This magnificent concert-hall will be, ere this reaches the eye of the reader, formally opened to the public. It is a matter for congratulation that we now possess (thanks to the enterprise of Sir Hugh Allan) a hall second to none in the Dominion; indeed, we doubt very much if there is anywhere on the continent a more suitable or well-arranged music-room, while the decorations are really elegant.

The hall contains seats for 1,150 persons (as many as are likely, for years to come, to assemble at one time), and will probably accommodate four or five hundred more in an emergency. The design includes a semi-circular orchestra with seats for two hundred singers; on ordinary occasions, however, the lower tiers are removed, disclosing a large platform, judiciously graded. The architects, Messrs. Hutchinson & Steele, are to be congratulated on the success of their labours, as indeed are all who may have occasion either to occupy the platform or the auditorium. The hall is leased, as most things are now, by a "Syndicate," the manager being Mr. C. C. DeZouche. We have no doubt the hall will be steadily employed, as it supplies a large and deeply-felt want.

THE ORGAN.

The contract for this instrument has been awarded to Messrs. Bolton & Smith of this city. Mr. Bolton has been long known in Montreal in connection with the establishment of Messrs. S. R. Warren & Son, while Mr. Smith, his partner, has for some years conducted the business of the well-known Smith Organ Company of Rome. These gentlemen have leased a large factory, and have already received orders for several organs, including the one for the above hall. It will be put in execution immediately, and the builders expect to have it completed in about three months.

The original design was for a four-manual organ, but it has been decided to connect the solo stops with the "swell" manual, the console to be placed on the ground floor in front of the platform, the trackers and draw-stops running underneath to the back, where the organ is to be erected. Pneumatic action will be applied to the lower notes of the great organ, and other modern ideas, such as radiating pedals, and oblique drawstop action, will be adopted in the construction of the instrument.

The complete specification is too lengthy for publication, suffice it to say, however, that the great organ will contain twelve stops, the swell a like number, the choir nine, the solo organ four, and the pedal organ eight, making, with the couplers, exactly fifty stops. Nearly all the stops will "run through," so it will be seen that the instrument will be, so far as size is concerned, ahead of anything hitherto erected here. A *vox humana* is being specially imported from Paris for the solo organ, which will be placed in a separate swell box surmounting the other chests, and which will, doubtless, prove very effective.

THE PIANO.

We have been shewn the Grand Weber piano imported by the New York Piano Co. for Sir Hugh Allan, which is to be placed in the Queen's Hall. It is a fine "Concert-Grand" of the newest construction, and is in every respect a first-class instrument. Its tone is powerful and sonorous, while the touch is both light and even. As it will remain permanently in the hall, many of our readers will be able to go and hear it for themselves.

OUR CANADIAN VIOLINIST.

Mr. Deseve informs us that he has not abandoned the idea of making a tour through the United States, and that the concert-party, consisting, besides himself of M. H. M. Smith, Mr. W. H. Tower, and other well-known artists is to be formed immediately, the initial concerts being already announced in Boston. It seems that the arrangements were delayed in consequence of the election excitement.

We are sorry to lose Mr. Deseve, and feel sure that wherever he may go he will reflect credit on Canada, and add to the increasing reputation of Canadian musicians.

TORONTO PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY.

We have received the handsome prospectus of the above Society for the current season, and record such information concerning its movements as we think will prove interesting to our readers. The programme for this season will comprise Smart's *Bride of Dunkerron*, *Judas Maccabens*, and Schumann's *Gipsy Life*, with orchestral and choral selections, including several operatic numbers. Mr. F. H. Torrington retains his post as conductor, the organist being Mr. E. P. Doward and the Pianiste Miss Synnys. We noticed among the list of compositions already performed such as *Elijah*, *Naaman St. Paul*, and others which have never yet been performed in Montreal, we hope our Philharmonic will treat us to one of them during the present season, as the repetition of Handel's masterpiece is, to say the least, monotonous.

A Boy's Choir is being formed in connection with the Cathedral; about thirty boys being already enrolled.

THE Mendelssohn Choir re-assembles next week.

Mr. Charles Gould, Jr., has been appointed organist of the American Presbyterian Church.

CRUEL!

At a concert recently given by a city church choir, the organist favoured the audience with a song, which his friends (rather injudiciously, we think,) *encored*, thus condemning him to perform another solo. This in itself was bad enough, but the *Star* reporter caps the climax in his *critique*. The organist is reported to have sung "two comic songs, which amused the audience very much." Is this ignorance or refined sarcasm?

[The above was crowded out of last week's issue.]

OPENING OF QUEEN'S HALL.

Owing to want of space we are unable to give an account of the Grand Opening Concert. Suffice it to say that it reflected great credit on the management, and proved the hall to be well adapted for the purposes for which it was built.

Chess.

THE LAW OF COUNTING FIFTY MOVES.

To the Chess Editor of the CANADIAN SPECTATOR:

DEAR SIR,—My attention has been called to some correspondence in the *Toronto Globe* in regard to a decision made by the Conductor of the Hamilton Chess Club Correspondence Tourney, under the law for counting fifty moves.

The extraordinary decision rendered, and the support given to it by the Chess Editor of the *Globe* would have been inexplicable to me but for a reference to "preponderance of force" in one of the Editor's answers, which gives me a clue to the misapprehension under which they appear to labour. Preponderance of force, alone, furnishes no reason for the application of the 50 move rule; and more, the greater the preponderance, the further the case is removed from the operation of that law, which is designed to force a draw game to a conclusion, and not for the purpose of enabling a player to escape the result of blundering, because mate cannot be forced in a certain specified time.

The *Globe* Editor appears to object to any inference as to the meaning of the law and to insist on a strict application of the letter of it. I propose to show from the law itself and from the references expressly made to it in explanation of its meaning, by the author himself, that the decision under discussion is perfectly unjustifiable.

The Editor's statement that prolonging the game 50 moves would extend it far beyond the average length has no bearing on the point, even if correct. My own experience would show that if all games were played out to a mate the average duration would be a good deal over fifty moves. His assertion that "the preponderance of force is equivalent to the many moves required to force a winning position" is not clear in its meaning, unless we are to assume that immediately one player gains an advantage he is to be handicapped by the requirement to force a mate in fifty moves. Nor is the term "winning position," which I imagine, in the game which has given rise to this question, one player already had, interchangeable with the "mating position," (perhaps I ought to say *mated* position) which he is compelled to bring about.

The wording of the clause under which the claim was submitted to the referee certainly allows a claim to be made at any time; but the fact of the claim being permitted by the law does not justify the referee in any decision he may choose to give, and this is the sort of idea which the Editor's comments seem to convey.

In a game in a tournament not long ago played in London, the forces at the ending were a King, Rook and Pawn against King, Rook and three Pawns, (at least, I believe these were the forces.) Mr. Blackburn, playing the weaker side, demanded the operation of the 50-move law, but his opponent, Mr. Mason, demurred, on the ground that he had not as yet exhausted all means of winning. Now this case shows, that, whether a player be entitled to quite so much latitude as Mr. Mason claimed or not, the mere question of preponderance in force is not the only one to be considered. If it were, how many games would be played without this law being invoked?

The law in question, (Staunton's XIV) after specifying certain positions and circumstances to which it applies, goes on to say "And whenever one player considers that one side can force the game, or that neither side can win it, 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." Mark the wording of this clause; it is not that because one side can force the game that the law applies, (if so where is the need of submitting it to an umpire?) but only that one player may appeal for a decision as to whether the position calls for the action of the law. In making that decision the umpire is bound to consider any explanation of the meaning of the law made by the law-giver himself, and actually accompanying it. To these explanations I am now about to refer. In *Notes and Observations* which refer expressly to the Regulations for playing, we find, on page 31. "Counting fifty moves. A separate chapter has been devoted to this subject which cannot be duly considered in a brief note. * * * The present English law limits the counting to end games with pieces only. But since the rule is intended to force drawn games to a conclusion, it ought clearly to comprise all instances of that nature. * * * The rule in the text extends still further, in bringing any position under its operation which the umpire considers to possess the indefinable qualities of an end game."

The separate chapter commences on page 49 and covers over three pages of small print. I make a few extracts, and observations. "The precise circumstances under which the counting 50 moves may be demanded are not easy to describe in words." Now if preponderance of force were one, what would be easier than to add it to those specified? "Such positions are usually either complicated with pawns which excludes them from the operation of this law." "There is no doubt that some limit must be fixed so that games with R and Kt against R or Bs of dissimilar colors with pawns against each other may not uselessly be continued all day." "We now come to the definition of what is to be understood by an end game, or the much sought estimate of the given relation of force to which alone the rule is applicable." I might make many more extracts to the same effect but confine myself to one more which of itself seems conclusive. "The regulation is simply intended to force a drawn game to a conclusion." Page 52.

I have read the Law and Observations thereon carefully and nowhere do I find any hint or suggestion that the loss of a piece or a pawn or of a piece for one of inferior value entitles the loser to claim the benefits of the 50 move rule. I should like to hear the arguments by which the referee would sustain his decision.

New York 16th October 1880.

Yours truly,

A. P. Barnes.

To the Chess Editor CANADIAN SPECTATOR:

DEAR SIR,—Since my letter of the 16th instant I have read the *Globe* of the same date with the Chess Editor's defence of the position he has assumed in the dispute on the fifty-move question. A lamer and more feeble attempt to bolster up a bad cause I have never seen. After saying (what is agreed on all hands) that the last clause of the rule is the only one bearing on the question at issue, he proceeds to state that he sees no ground for the assumption that end-games alone are referred to, because—firstly, the first section refers to positions that may arise in the opening or middle game (the force of this exquisite piece of logic is readily apparent), and then, after denying that the last clause has the meaning stated, proceeds with beautiful simplicity to quote, in the very next paragraph, Staunton's assertion that the rule is extended for the express purpose of bringing under its operation all classes of end-games. Now, the extension of the rule is the very "last clause" the meaning of which he disputes!

He may class as an end-game a position where mate can be forced in a reasonable number of moves, but before he includes in that category a position where at the sixth move a player has gained considerable advantage, he should be required to demonstrate that mate can be forced in fifty moves. Further than this, it has to be remembered that the fact of a position being an end-game does not, of itself, bring it under this law.

He asks: "Is it too much to ask that the superior force (Queen against Kt and all other pieces and pawns on the board) shall be required to finish the game in fifty moves?" He may not consider so, but, before applying his opinion to a case to be judicially decided, I recommend him to refer to Rule XIX, which, with singular fatality, he proceeds to quote in the following paragraph, that the umpire "must always apply the laws as he finds them herein expressed, and neither assume the power of modifying them nor of deviating from them in particular cases according to his own judgment."

If he had not quoted from Staunton's references to the meaning of the law I should have supposed that he had not read them, and have confined myself to asking him to do so, but now I am at a loss to understand how any one can agree that the law applies to cases of preponderance of force, with no other reason for its application, with such words as "the law is intended to force drawn games to a conclusion," and the more forcible one—"the regulation is simply intended to force drawn games to a conclusion"—staring him in the face.

Yours truly,

New York, 21st Oct. 1880.

A. P. Barnes.

NOTE.—The rest of our column is unavoidably postponed.—CH. ED. CAN. SPEC.