

OUR CHESS COLUMN.

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

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. W. S., Montreal.—Papers to hand. Many thanks. S. J. S., Montreal.—Correct solution received of Problem No. 299.

THE FIFTY MOVE LAW.

The following sensible letter on the fifty move question we gladly insert at the request of the writer.

Toronto, November 24th, 1880.

J. W. SHAW, Esq., Montreal.

Dear Sir,—I have much pleasure in complying with your request, for my views as to the rightfulness of the decision of the Conductor of the H. C. C. Correspondence Tourney on the fifty move question.

After carefully perusing the law in "Praxis" and the notes and observations on the subject, together with the letters which have appeared in the Spectator and the Quebec Chronicle, I have decided to base my opinions on the law itself.

I find the only clause at all applicable to the case is the one which reads as follows:

"When one player considers that one side can force the game, or that neither can win it, he has the right of submitting the case to the umpire or bystanders, who shall decide whether the game is one for the fifty move counting."

The whole question, in my opinion, depends entirely upon the meaning of this clause.

Dr. Ryall and our friend, the Editor of the Globe Column understand it to mean—that the umpire shall consider whether the position is one that can be forced in fifty moves, and if so, he has no other alternative but to allow the fifty move limit to take effect. Now, if this construction of the clause is correct, the decision of the Conductor is also correct, inasmuch as it is in accordance with the law governing the Tourney; and, in fact, I do not see how he could give any other decision in the face of the directions to the umpire in the 19th rule of the regulations for playing.

I take an entirely different view of the meaning of this clause. I maintain that it gives the umpire the power to decide whether the fifty move shall take effect without regard to the fact that the game can be forced in fifty moves, and as a matter of course, I cannot concur in the decision arrived at by the worthy Doctor.

I will endeavour to give my reasons in support of this opinion as clearly and as briefly as possible. As an example, say, White has two rooks against Black's one, with an equal number of pawns, unmoved, and Black's only rook is pinned. It is White's turn to move, and Black demands the application of the fifty move law, on the ground that White is in a position to force the game (by taking rook). If Dr. Ryall is right in his contention, the umpire would have no option but to allow the demand made by Black. Fancy a player having a King and Queen against his King making the demand. It seems ridiculous, but still the umpire has no choice under Dr. Ryall's meaning of the law. While, if on the other hand, my view is sustained, the umpire would have the right to decide (in spite of the fact that the game can be forced in fifty moves) whether the position is one for the fifty move counting.

If Stanton intended that all games that could be forced should come under the operation of the fifty move law, surely it would have been easy enough for him to say so in as many words, and the matter would have been placed beyond dispute. I cannot find in either the law, or the notes and observations, a single reference to positions of the nature I have referred to, as coming under the operation of the fifty move limit.

As an evidence that my contentions are correct, suppose we refer to some of the great masters where one side has obtained a signal advantage, and proceeds to force the game. Can Dr. Ryall point to a single one where the application for the fifty move limit has been granted? Did he ever hear of a case where a player who had lost his Queen for a minor piece through a blunder, asked for the application of the law? The course generally pursued, so far as I can learn, has been for the blunderer to resign. I have only heard of one case prior to the one under discussion, where a demand has been made for the fifty move counting. The facts were as follows:

One side, say White, made the demand, to which Black demurred, on the ground that he (Black) had not exhausted every means of winning in his power, and the umpire sustained Black's demurrer.

This clearly shows me that the fifty move law was never intended to affect cases where one player had lost his Queen for a minor piece.

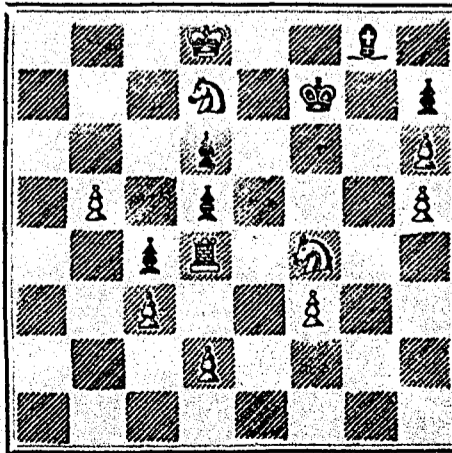
I think it should apply to the following cases only: to the cases enumerated in the first three paragraphs of the 14th clause of the rules for playing; to cases where after a protracted struggle there is no visible line of play by which the game can be won; to cases where one player persists in the same line of attack without producing any effect on the game; and to cases where the weaker side thinks he sees a way in which the game can be forced, while his opponent hesitates to pursue that course, thinking it un sound, and proceeds to play waiting moves in the hope that the weaker side will make a mistake.

I do not know that I can say anything more on the subject, that has not been touched upon before, in fact, I have already been trespassing on ideas other than my own. It is a fortunate circumstance that this question has come up in the present instance, because, whether the decision be right or wrong, no harm will result from it, as I apprehend you will have no difficulty in complying with the worthy Conductor's decision, and still win your game.

Yours very truly, W. A. LITTLEJOHN.

PROBLEM No. 303

By J. Thorsby. BLACK.



WHITE. White to play and mate in three moves.

SOLUTIONS.

Solution of Problem No. 303.

White. 1. Q to KR6. 2. Mates a.c. Black. 1. Any move.

Solution of Problem for Young Players No. 301.

WHITE. 1. P to K4. 2. R mates. BLACK. 1. P moves.

PROBLEM FOR YOUNG PLAYERS, No. 302.

White. K at KR6, Q at K4, R at K Kt5, B at K B4, Bat Q Kt5, Kt at Q5. Black. K at KB2, R at Q B3, B at Ksq, Kt at K Kt3. White to play and mate in two moves.

THE GLEANER.

ROMAN Catholicism does not prosper in the city of London. The latest statistics indicate a steady decline in interest and numbers.

ROWELL'S latest walking feats occupied but thirty lines or so, daily, in the London Times, under the heading "Sporting Intelligence."

THE monument which marks the site of Temple Bar was unveiled on the 8th inst., in presence of Prince Leopold and the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London.

EGYPT has been visited with a curious fever of late that came with the high Nile, and will, no doubt, depart with it. It is mild in character, but has attacked about fifty per cent. of the whole population.

IT is announced at the Census Bureau at Washington that the final result, as far as the population is concerned, will be reached by the middle of December.

PHILADELPHIA rejoices in a line of cheap coaches. They carry only eight persons each, are as easy as rocking-chairs, and the fare is five cents, with six tickets for twenty-five cents.

WHEN a widow marries again the wedding-ring of her first marriage remains, as a rule, on the finger, and the ring of the second marriage is worn above it.

THERE is to be a new daily paper in London consecrated to the Liberal interest. It is understood that Dr. Wallace, late editor of the Edinburgh Scotsman, has accepted the editorship.

MR. ALFRED TENNYSON is about to publish a new volume of ballad and other rhymed poems. It is to contain various "English Idylls" and verses in dialect after the manner of "The Northern Farmer."

THE Chicago Times has ordered several typesetting machines from Belgium. The invention is said to work successfully, and a branch manufacturing establishment is to be founded in Chicago.

GARFIELD is one of the youngest men who ever became President. On Nov. 19th he was only forty-nine years old. He is also one of the few men who ever became President, and brought his mother to the White House.

MRS. LINCOLN, widow of the lamented President Lincoln, is described as looking old and worn. Her hair is almost white and her form has become heavy, and she displays little interest in what goes on about her.

1881.

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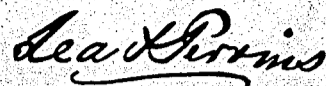
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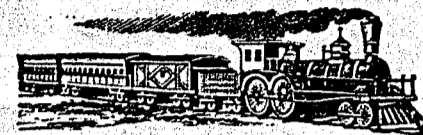
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