

Musical.

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

A PLEA FOR INSTRUMENTALISTS.

It is amusing at times to observe the patronizing way in which vocalists talk of instrumental performers. Many singers look on instrumentalists as altogether inferior, professionally, to themselves; and although anyone possessing even a fair musical education knows that it is quite the other way, still from long established usage the public are accustomed to give undue credit to vocalists and not nearly enough to instrumentalists.

We do not agree with most people in considering vocal music the highest form of composition, but, without discussing that matter at present, let us consider what are the relative positions, at a mixed concert, of vocalists and instrumentalists, and endeavour to call public attention to the fact that the latter are generally underrated, underpaid, and not infrequently snubbed by persons far beneath them both as regards professional and general education.

In a choral society the members practice a work for several weeks (sometimes months) before attempting to perform it in public; it is questionable if many societies would ever get as far as a public performance if the vocal parts were not pounded for them on a pianoforte; yet these singers, who learn for the most part by ear, criticise severely the performance of the orchestra which accompanies them at first sight, and assume an air of lofty superiority which would be amusing were it not, to many of the players at least, quite a serious matter.

While every member of a choir or orchestra must of necessity know something of the principles of musical notation, many persons who take solo parts sing entirely by ear, and when they begin a bar too soon, or too late, as the case may be, expect the members of the orchestra to know by intuition concerning their peregrinations and to "follow" them, although the gentlemen of the band have not the remotest idea what music is in the vocal parts, and are reading their own at sight. The only means orchestral players have of keeping together is by counting the bars carefully; if, however, the singer omits a bar (as is frequently done) some of the players acquainted with the vocal part go on with her (or him) while the remainder count their time confidently, the result being chaos. The singer then looks indignantly at the conductor, and the audience mutter imprecations because the poor man cannot keep his orchestra together! the singer, instead of being censured for incompetency, receiving not only the plaudits, but the sympathies of the audience.

We had the misfortune to be present lately at a private musical entertainment. Most of the guests were engaged in conversation, when a lady was led to the piano. The conversation immediately ceased, as it was whispered that Miss Grazioso was going to sing. She did not sing, however, but played with great taste and feeling one of Schumann's exquisite pieces. "Ah, she is only going to play," said a gentleman, and the conversation was resumed! Now, why is not the same courtesy accorded to a pianist as to a vocalist? The former spends years in cultivating a skilful touch and masterly technique, while the latter frequently has never given a thought to technique, or the production of tone, and has not even picked up the melody of his song correctly. Yet the inartistic utterances of the one are listened to with courteous attention if not with admiration, while the exquisite interpretation of the noblest compositions by the other are not accorded a hearing. We have heard persons talk of a gentleman as an "excellent musician," when the gentleman aforesaid knew no more of music than we do of Sanskrit; he has taken a prominent part in a musical performance, being the possessor of a good voice. He did not always sing correctly, and never artistically, yet many who heard him put him down as a fine musician, far superior to the man who accompanied him on the piano, and his opinion ever after on matters musical was listened to with deference and attention. Now what claims had he to be classed as a musician? He was "a man with a good voice"—nothing more. If every person possessing the primary requisites of a pursuit or profession is to be classed with those who have cultivated their talents, and acquired a certain amount of skill and technical knowledge, then a man who is not blind has only to obtain a telescope in order to become an astronomer.

At our concerts at the present day, the most responsible position is held by the accompanist. He must be able to play correctly and tastefully, and is frequently called upon to transpose music at sight. In these days, too, mere "accompaniments" are hardly known, the songs being for the most part duets for voice and piano, the latter part being by far the most difficult; yet the singer takes all the credit if, through an effectively-played accompaniment the performance be a success, throwing all the blame on the pianist if the contrary be the result. These singers' names are blazoned forth in all the glory of large capitals, while the poor accompanist is squeezed in at the bottom, and worse still, he receives the least remuneration for his services. Should a pianist be unable to play a passage in an accompaniment in time, he would be scouted at once as incompetent; yet we know many vocalists who from their inability to sing certain passages have either left them out altogether or obliged the accompanist to play incorrectly in order to accommodate them.

We know not if with advancing years matters will mend in these respects, but we think it manifestly unjust that pianists, conductors, and orchestral players should be blamed for the fault of others. If an accompanist does happen to get wrong, the singer is not usually slow to make the audience acquainted with the fact, and we think that when a singer omits a bar or a portion of a bar the accompanist cannot reasonably be expected to play, any more than the singer can be held to his engagement when the accompanist is incompetent. If accompanists throughout the country would only take a firm stand in this matter, the "man with a voice" would have no place nor part at musical entertainments.

LOCAL NEWS.

THE new concert-hall which is being erected by Sir Hugh Allan will be opened about the beginning of May. It is to contain a large three-manual organ, and will accommodate over twelve hundred persons.

MR. GOULD has reconsidered his determination to give no more public concerts of the Mendelssohn Choir. We are to have a performance early next month, when Mendelssohn's *Lorely* will be given with full orchestral accompaniment. We congratulate the choir on this new departure.

THE "Montreal Operatic Society" adopted the novel plan of appointing a conductor by tender. Mr. Hecker having made the lowest tender was appointed. The society is about to rehearse Planquette's "Chimes of Normandy" with a view to future performance in public.

PROVINCIAL NOTES.

HAMILTON, ONT.—On Tuesday the 13th inst., Mrs. Adamson and Mr. Aldous gave the third of their series of concerts in the school-room of the Church of the Ascension. The instrumental portion comprised the Andante and Rondo of Mozart's Twelfth Sonata, for violin and piano; Kücken's "Slumber Song," arranged for violin solo with trio accompaniment; Raff's "Cavatina" and a Fantasia of De Beriot for violin solo; and the Adagio and Rondo (gypsy) of Haydn's First Trio, for piano, violin and cello. Miss Callaghan was associated with at the piano with Mrs. Adamson in the Mozart Sonata and the pieces by Raff and De Beriot, and played Chopin's "Tarantelle," op. 43, exceedingly well. She plays with great precision and expression, but has a somewhat restless manner at the piano. Mrs. Adamson's playing was more effective even than usual; her selections giving ample scope for tone, feeling and brilliant execution. Mr. Aldous took the piano in the Haydn trio, and played a Sarabande in A minor by F. Hiller. The vocal part of the concert consisted of "In the woods at early dawn," from Dudley Bach's "Don Munio," sung by Mr. Steele; a Sailor's Song, given by Miss Morson; and Miss Maggie Barr's contributions were: (1) "Within a mile o' Edinboro' toon," with quintette accompaniment specially arranged by Mr. Aldous—the arrangement is very effective, but might have been improved by more rehearsal—(2) "Margarita's three bouquets," by Braza, and (3) an "Irish Lullaby," arranged by C. Villiers Stanford. This latter was the best sung and probably the most pleasing vocal selection of the evening. The whole concert was eminently successful; the room was quite full and the audience appreciative and discriminating.

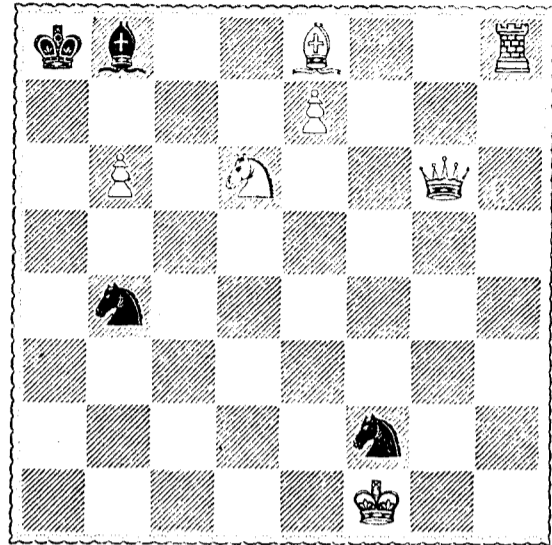
Chess.

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Montreal, Jan. 24th, 1880.

PROBLEM NO. LVI.

By Mr. W. Geary. From *The British Empire*.  
BLACK.



WHITE.

White to play and mate in two moves.

SOLUTION TO PROBLEM NO. LIII. By Conrad Bayer.

White. Black. White. Black. White. Black. White.  
1 Kt to K Kt 3 B to K Kt 4 2 K to K R 5 B to Q sq 3 Q to K B 4 (ch) K takes Q 4 B mates.

Correct solution received from W.A., "A fine and difficult problem."

GAME NO. II.

We have much pleasure in presenting our readers with a most brilliant little game, played some time since in New York, by Mr. Grundy of Manchester, the English representative in the present American Chess Congress, against Mr. P. Richardson of New York. From *Turf, Field and Farm*.

SICILIAN OPENING.

WHITE.	BLACK.	WHITE.	BLACK.	WHITE.	BLACK.
Mr. Grundy.	Mr. Richardson.	7 P takes B	K Kt to B 3	14 Q to Kt 6	P to Q 4
1 P to K 4	P to Q B 3	8 B to Q B 4	B to K 2	15 Kt takes Q P	Kt to Q R 4 (e)
2 K Kt to B 3	Q Kt to B 4	9 P to K Kt 4	P to K R 3	16 P takes Kt P	P takes Q
3 P to Q 4	P takes P	10 P to K R 4	Castles (c)	17 Kt to K 7 dblch	K takes P
4 Kt takes P	P to K 4 (a)	11 P to K Kt 5	Kt to K R 2	18 B to R 6 (ch)	K to R sq
5 K Kt to B 5 (b)	P to Q 1	12 P takes R P	B takes K R P	19 Kt takes Kt P mate (f)	
6 Q Kt to B 3	B takes Kt	13 Q to K Kt 4 (d)	B to K B 3		

NOTES—(a) Almost always a weak move in the Sicilian defence. K Kt to B 3 or P to K 3 are the "book" moves.  
(b) This turns out very well in the present game; but whether it is as good as K Kt to B 3 we are inclined to question.  
(c) Rather venturesome, we think, to castle in the face of these dangerous-looking Pawns.  
(d) Mr. Grundy's play from this point is of the highest order, being remarkable both for brilliancy and accuracy of combination.  
(e) If P takes Q, White mates in two moves.  
(f) One rarely meets with such a piquant termination as this in actual play.

CHESS INTELLIGENCE.

A USEFUL little pamphlet has been issued by the Directorate of *La Nuova Rivista*, containing the prize problems in all the International Tournaments that have been held during the years 1878 and 1879. We have therefore in a form most convenient and easy for reference, one hundred and twenty of the best productions in this department of chess for the last two years. The collection is presented gratis to the subscribers to the *Nuova Rivista*, but can be had on payment of three lire, or about forty-five cents. It is produced under the supervision of Sig. Emilio Orsini, the well-known problem composer, who intends, if the present attempt is favourably received, to issue similar collections at different times.

We have also received an elegant little collection of "Morphy's Endings," dedicated to American Chess players. It is compiled and published by the same energetic and enterprising body of *dilettanti* who edit *La Nuova Rivista*, and is a grateful and opportune tribute to Morphy's memory and the interest taken in American Chess by foreign nations. The "Endings" number thirty-two, and the key move to every position is given at the end in a table. They were published in the *Magazine* monthly during the year, and are now collected in a separate form. In the *Magazine* for December we notice a puzzle by Mr. R. McLeod, of Quebec; viz.: "Place a White King and two Rooks in such a position that mate can be given to the Black King in two moves, but if a Queen be substituted for one of the Rooks, mate can only be given in three moves."

FIFTH AMERICAN CHESS CONGRESS.—The play in the Grand Tourney still continues, and the interest in it increases as the end approaches. There have been some surprises, as the sudden rise and successes of Mr. Grundy, the subordinate position of Capt. Mackenzie at the commencement, though he is now picking up, and his two draws with Sellman, Congdon's stalemate with Delmar, &c. But we have this firm conviction that there have been played some of the finest games of chess that have ever been made public, and the book of the Congress will be a most valuable work. An enthusiastic reporter for one of the New York dailies, excited, no doubt, by the closeness of the struggle between Messrs. Grundy and Judd, ingeniously states that so even was it that one had made 91 moves, while his opponent had scored 92. The Managing Committee are arranging a Minor Tourney, of which the first prize will be \$100. Entrance fee, \$5; to commence Feb. 1st. The Congress Banquet will take place on Tuesday, January 27th, at the Westminster Hotel. The score on Wednesday morning stood: Cohnfield, won 0, lost 13; Congdon, won 3½, lost 9½; Grundy, won 11, lost 2; Delmar, won 7½, lost 5½; Judd, won 9, lost 4; Mackenzie, won 9, lost 4; Mohle, won 8½, lost 4½; Ryan, won 5, lost 8; Sellman, won 7½, lost 5½; Ware, won 4, lost 9.