

History

Preparatory to the move of Qc2.

This is a novelty; whether it is better than 9. Bxc6+ bxc6 10. 0-0 or 10. Be3 would require a long analysis to determine.—*Chess Monthly*

9. ... 0-0 10. Bxc6 bxc6 11. Qc2 Nxd2 12. Bxd2 Bg4 13. Ng5 g6

“The game has opened very brilliantly, the Philadelphians adopting their favorite “Scotch Gambit.” It is too soon to express any very positive opinion on the game, but Philadelphia is strongly posted, in a very attacking position, and the chances are much in their favor.” *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, December 19th, 1858

Game adjourned to December 21st.

14. Qc3 f6 15. h3 Bf5

Better than taking the knight, as White would then have opened the rook file.

16. Nf3 Be4 17. Bf4 fxe5 18. Bxe5 Qe7 19. 0-0-0 c5

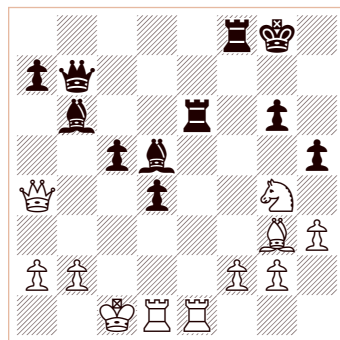
“The storm which prevailed last evening so seriously deranged the working of the line, that only six moves were effected, and in most hands the attempt to play at all would not have been made. But Mr. Manager Bullock seems to be gifted with energies and resources equal to any emergency, and to be determined that the American Telegraph Company shall, if necessary, effect impossibilities; and the result showed what such enterprise can accomplish.”—*Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, December 19.

Game adjourned to December 22nd.

20. Rhe1 cxd4 21. Bxd4 c5 22. Be5 Rae8

Weak. We cannot see its object. Why not 22. ... Rad8?

23. Bg3 Qb7 24. Ne5 d4 25. Qc4+ Bd5 26. Qa4 Re6 27. Ng4 h5



After 27. ... h5

Instead of this move 27. ... Bc7; or 27. ... Bd8 was urged by some of the New York committee; 27. ... Qe7 also has its favorable points.—*Chess Monthly*

“The nightly throng at the office of the American Telegraph Company shows there is no diminution of interest in this great trial of skill between Philadelphia

and New York. The moves last night were made with great caution on both sides, each party evidently feeling that they had reached the critical position of the game. Philadelphia has fairly regained the attack, which was lost for a time on the preceding evening, and the general expression of opinion, as we gathered it last night from “outsiders,” was, that “our side” had the best of it. The intervening of Christmas has caused an adjournment to next Tuesday, when an effort will be made to conclude the game.”—*Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, December 23.

“The second game of the match between Philadelphia and New York is now in progress, and will doubtless be finished next week, when we shall publish it with full notes. As far as it has progressed it has certainly been as brilliant and spirited a game as the most exciting critics could demand.” *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, December 25.

Game adjourned to December 28.

28. Rxe6 Bxe6 29. Qc2 Kh7 30. Re1 Bf5 31. Qd2

A powerful move, as it compels Black to take the knight, and thereby opens White’s rook file.

31. ... hxg4 32. hxg4 Qd5

To hinder by a counterattack the contemplated Qg5.—*Chess in Philadelphia*

If 32. ... Bxg4 White would have played 33. Qg5 threatening to check the king and queen with the rook, or win the bishop.—*Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*

We should be glad to see a thorough analysis of the move 32. ... Be4.—*Chess Monthly*

33. Rh1+

An all important check before taking the bishop, as it prevented an interposition of ... Rh5.

33. ... Kg8 34. gxf5 Qxf5 35. Qh6 g5 36. Bd6 Rf6 37. Qh5

A better move than checking, as it prevented Black’s king from escaping to f7 and then to e6. White also threatened g4.

37. ... Qg6 38. Qh8+ Kf7 39. Re1, Black resigned.

“The grand coup,” wrote Gustavus Reichhelm forty years later in *Chess in Philadelphia*, “worthily winding up a brilliantly earned victory. ... It was on the last recess, between the 22nd and 28th, that Mr. H. P. Montgomery’s remarkable analytical ability was brought to bear upon the position. His analysis occupied about ten closely written pages, demonstrating to his admiring colleagues that the win was indeed forced.”

After the congratulatory telegrams were

exchanged, the Athenaeum players’ planning for the victory celebration began. The Quaker City’s chessplayers arranged a “chess banquet” and toasted themselves and their opponents. But Philadelphia’s glory was to be short-lived. Although she would keep her supremacy in chess by telegraph to almost the end of the century, the Quaker city was already in 1859 only a few years from being relegated to second rank among American chess centers. Her leading lights would have poor match results against New York players, with H. P. Montgomery, hero of the second telegraph game, losing to New York’s Theodore Lichtenhein by 9-3, and Gustavus Reichhelm losing two U.S. championship matches to George Mackenzie by equally lopsided scores.

Telegraphy continued to advance, with the Atlantic finally being permanently bridged by wire in 1868. The American Telegraph Company continues to this day as part of Western Union, having been swallowed up in what nowadays would be called ‘a consolidation in the tech sector.’ David Hughes, the printer inventor, would see his device adopted by many foreign telegraph systems, although it never broke the stranglehold the Morse “key” had on the American market. Hughes would also live to see the telegraph replaced as a primary communication tool by its child the telephone, born in 1876 as an attempt at an improved telegraph.

Chess continued to be played over the telegraph. The boom caused by the match continued for a brief period afterwards, but soon public interest in the United States was drawn to other matters, such as the Civil War, and the number of games played dwindled to a solitary few. But games continued to be played, and at times they were notable events, such as the series of cable matches between the United States and the United Kingdom from 1897 to 1912.

And perhaps more importantly for correspondence chess, players have continued to adopt new technology as it emerges, and used it in their pastime. The Internet is the latest example of this habit. But while we glory in chess servers and e-mail, we should take a moment to remember the correspondence chessplayers of the telegraph era. After all, they were online too. ■

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