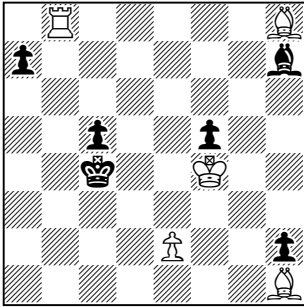


## BROWSING IN THE LIBRARY, by Michael McDowell

A G.N.Cheney

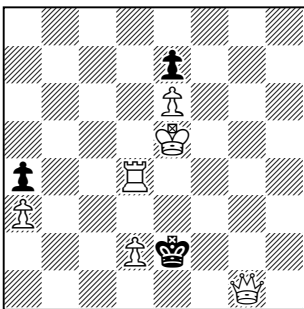
Source?



#5

B J.Wilcox Brown

Source?

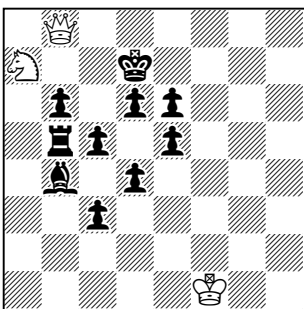


#3

C S.Loyd

New York Albion

14.6.1856

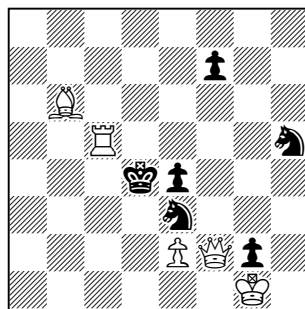


#5

D E.B.Cook

Winona Republican

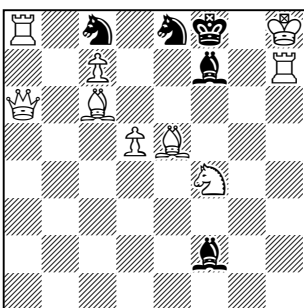
3.9.1858



#3

E T.M.Brown

Source?

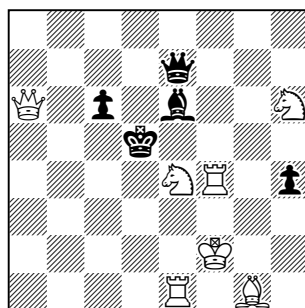


#2

F C.H.Stanley

The Spirit of the Times

1.3.1845



S#4

**American Chess Nuts.** A collection of problems by composers of the western world. Edited by E.B.Cook, W.R.Henry and C.A.Gilberg. 640 pages, 2405 diagrams. New York, 1868.

The genesis of this substantial volume was a handwritten collection of over 4000 problems compiled from American sources by a colourful individual named William Henry Russ (1833-66), who used the pseudonym W.R.Henry and was one of the earliest collectors to appreciate the importance of chess columns. According to E.B.Cook's introduction, Henry contacted Cook in 1859 to discuss the possibility of using his material as the basis of a representative collection of American problems. This contradicts *Sam Loyd and his chess problems*, which mentions Cook as the originator of the idea, and quotes from a letter from Loyd, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1858, supporting such a venture. It was decided that if enough subscriptions were obtained to cover costs Cook and Henry would edit a publication containing 1000 problems, so a prospectus was issued to drum up support. This included the invitation "Composers who wish their productions to appear to the best advantage are requested to forward the latest versions..." - an attitude which was common in the 19th century but which drives modern database compilers to despair! Chess columnists were enthusiastic, and Henry continued assembling material, but subscriptions were slow to come in and the project foundered. During the Civil War chess activity became moribund as most columns ceased publication. Henry pressed on, and the planned collection grew to nearer 1500, but he fell ill and spent a number of years recuperating in various parts of the world, eventually dying in January 1866. *The Oxford Companion to Chess* offers intriguing details: "Having unofficially adopted an 11-year-old girl and paid for her upbringing, he proposed marriage when she was 21. She rejected his offer and one evening in Brooklyn he shot her four times in the head, jumped

into the river to drown himself, found the tide out, climbed out, and shot himself twice in the head; muddy and freezing, he was arrested, interrogated, and taken to hospital. His injuries were not necessarily fatal, but he died ten days later, lacking the will to live. The woman survived." Had Henry lived to see a successful publication he intended following it up with a comprehensive international collection. Cook decided to bide his time, but increased offers of help with the various tasks of preparation led him to issue a general appeal for subscriptions "To the Lovers of Chess", which this time produced sufficient response to enable publication.

The book's declared aim was to represent leading composers with as full a collection of their works as possible, while assigning a niche to every author of merit. A variety of genres and lengths are represented. An examination of the contents leads to the conclusion that the general standard of composition in the USA in the years up to 1868 lagged behind Europe, with only a few composers standing out, namely Cook, George Nelson Cheney, and, of course, the colossal figure of Sam Loyd. Some young composers, such as G.E.Carpenter, would produce much better work in later years. One notable feature is the number of strong American players who composed chess problems. Eight of the sixteen competitors in the First American Chess Congress of 1857 have problems included.

Ironically, one of those not represented is Paul Morphy, whose only authenticated problem (kbK5/pp6/1P6/24/R7/8 – *New York Clipper* 1856, #2) is far better known than any by the others!

Cheney's death was a great loss to American chess problems. He died in 1861, aged 24, at the First Battle of Bull Run, the first major land battle of the Civil War. The lightly-set **A** features two anticritical manoeuvres. **B** may look vaguely familiar. If the pawns on the a and e-files are removed and the remaining pieces moved one square north-west we have a famous three-mover by Frank Healey, published in the *Illustrated London News* on 5th June 1858. The solutions are remarkably different. **C** is lightweight Loyd, more witty than puzzling. Good use is made of the white force in **D**, and the queen sacrifice is pretty. **E** is one of the earliest examples of a complete half-pin. On its own merits **F** is mediocre, but it has historical interest, being the first problem ever published in the United States and appearing in the first column. The composer (and column editor) Charles Henry Stanley was originally from Brighton. He was considered to be the American champion before the appearance of Morphy.

### Solutions:

**A** 1.Ba1 Bg8 2.Ke5 Bf7 3.Rb1 Bg8 4.Bb7 and 5.Ba6.

**B** 1.Rc4 (-) 1...Kxd2 2.Ke4 Ke2 3.Rc2; 1...Kd3 2.Qg2 Kxc4 3.Qd5; 1...Kf3 2.Rc1 Ke2 3.Qe3. There is an accidental try 1.Rb4? (-) Kxd2 2.Rb2+ ~ 3.Qd4; 1...Kf3 2.Rb1; 1...Kd3!. Healey solves by 1.Kd7 2.Rd5.

**C** 1.Sc6 (>2.Qb7+ Ke8 3.Qe7) 1...Kxc6 2.Qc8+ Kd5 3.Qa8+ Kc4 4.Qa2+ Kd3 5.Qe2; 1...d5 2.Qb7+ Kd6 3.Sd8 c4 4.Sf7+. Aptly nicknamed "The Pilot", and good work for a 15-year-old!

**D**: 1.Kh2 (>2.Qg1 and 3.Qa1) 1...Sf4 2.Qxe3+ Kxe3 3.Rc2.

**E**: 1.Qf1 (-) 1...Se7 2.Bg7; 1...Sc else or Se~ 2.Bd6; 1...Ke7 or B2~ 2.Sg6; 1...B7~ 2.Se6 or Sg6 accordingly.

**F**: 1.Qd3+ Ke5 2.Sg5+ Kxf4 3.Sh3+ Bxh3 4.Qg3+ hxg3.

## CHAMPIONSHIP SOLVING LADDER 2007

	Month	Jan	Mar	May	July	Sept	Nov	Year	Total
	<i>Maxima</i>	95	95	93	97	92	93	565	
L.Belcsak II		86	61	65	66	65	65	408	772
A.E.J.Bouwes IV		49	45	21	48	39	30	232	272
P.Christoforidis VII		48	39	42	28	39	25	221	<b>966</b>
J.A.Coello Alonso XIX		93	91	90	92	76	88	530	<b>1083</b>
B.Conway		24	26	15	15		9	89	352
J.Gill XXXIII		21						21	114
J.G.Grevatt				24	27	21	21	93	93
J.Grudulis VI		93	93		95		89	370	<b>1122</b>
M.Harington XXI		34	31	33	27		24	149	771
F.T.Holt XVIII		79		80	83	77	85	404	<b>871</b>
D.Johnston I		87	72	45				204	<b>963</b>
V.A.Krivenko VII		93	93	93	95	74	92	540	<b>1020</b>
R.Lazowski IX		95	93	92	97	92	93	562	<b>896</b>
P.le Grand I		30	30	30	30	24		144	211
O.Lewis		37	24			31		92	92
R.Lindberg IV		54	59	45	43	34		235	<b>986</b>
G.Lucenti XII		88	91	93	93	79	93	537	<b>1064</b>
D-I.Nicula II		93		93	90	82	93	451	685
E.Petite XI		79	75	75	46	60	77	412	<b>1089</b>
F.D.B.Praal XXVII		69		64	54			187	392
V.Sergeev I		83	85	82	95		59	404	603
D.J.Shire						18	24	42	279
P.Steiner I		27	30	30		24	24	135	583
T.van Oosterhout XI		92	77		80	82	89	420	<b>981</b>
A.Willmott XVII		93	93	93	84	82	85	530	<b>1192</b>
G.Yacoubian XVI			9	19				28	29
H.Yashiro			6					6	28

Congratulations to our champion solver, **Romuald Lazowski!** He scored 562 out of a maximum 565 and finished well ahead of the runners up: V.Krivenko (540), G.Lucenti (537), J.A.Coello-Alonso and A.Willmott (530).

Ladder ascents were made by J.A.Coello-Alonso 20, F.T.Holt 19, A.Willmott 18, G.Lucenti 13, E.Petite 12, T.van Oosterhout 12, R.Lazowski 10, P.Christoforidis 8, V.A.Krivenko 8, J.Grudulis 7, R.Lindberg 5, D.Johnston 2. Finally, a welcome to new solvers Jim Grevatt and Otis Lewis, and a return by former 2-move editor David Shire.

**Don Smedley**

## TOURNEY ANNOUNCEMENT

*Die Schwalbe* announces a composing tourney to mark the 50th birthday of Norbert Geissler, for **orthodox helpmates in more than 3 moves**. Judge: Norbert Geissler. Send by **30.11.2008** to Dieter Werner, Chemin des Turaines 43, CH-1251 Gy (bei Genf), Switzerland, or by email to ng50@gmx.ch.