



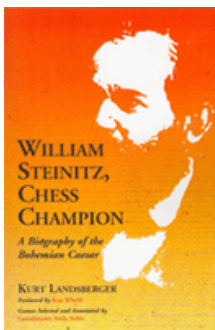
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## From the Archives

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## From the Archives...

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## From the "Personal and General" Column *International Chess Magazine*, February 1888

by Wilhelm Steinitz, Editor

Now a few earnest words to all whom it may concern, and I hope they will be the last I have to write on the subject. The elevating and enabling influence of Chess is universally extolled, and I thoroughly believe in it myself, for the reason that excellence in the game is a sure sign of strength of intellect, and I consider good nature the best part of human intelligence. Yet from time to time I, who at least as will be admitted, was one of the chief standard bearers of the progress and popularity of our game for more than a quarter of a century, have been described as an exception from the rule, not to repeat any stronger terms that have been applied.

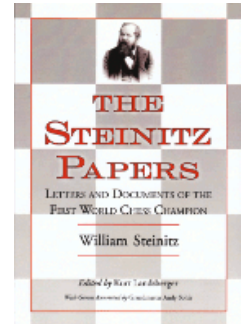
Now I do not wish to appeal in the least "ad misericordiam" and desire only to be judged on my true record and merits, but it will hardly be necessary to say more at this juncture of my life than to declare solemnly that to the best of my belief and knowledge there is not a single real stain on my public character during a career of nearly 27 years. On the contrary, if the whole truth were known, it would be found that without exception no one who occupied a prominent position in the Chess world before me could have acted in important Chess affairs less egotistically or more honorably than I have done.

Two accusations which I do not wish to leave "uncontradicted" and which have been only comparatively recently brought before the public for the first time, though they allude to matters that have occurred many years ago, will, I believe, furnish fair confirmation of the above assertion, when the real facts are correctly stated. One of the charges is compromised in a short sentence published in an article which appeared in a London periodical already spoken of in our March number of last year (page 82). It was to the effect that "When Kolisch entered the Paris tournament of 1867, two days after its commencement, Steinitz protested on principle," and as Kolisch the won the chief prize, while I came out third, the insinuation is clear that I tried to put obstacles in the way of his entrance.

Now let me tell you that this is exactly the reverse of the truth, and as a matter of fact it was I alone who helped him to enter that tournament after he had completely forfeited his right of entrance according to the rules.

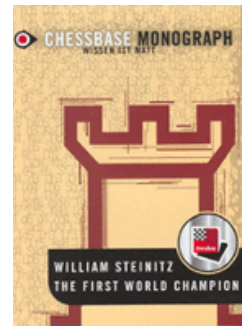
To separate my own evidence from the facts which can be corroborated I may here preface that according to the first issued programme of the Committee, which is not published in the Book of the Congress of 1867, but will most

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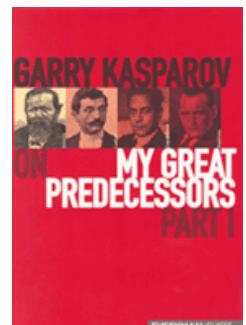
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probably be found in old libraries or periodicals of the time, all intending competitors, even from abroad, had to send in their entrance fee of 50 francs two months before the commencement of the tournament, and as a matter of course I had complied with that rule as well as other actual competitors. Morphy, Anderssen and Paulsen had been expected to enter but had not made their appearances a few days before the opening of the Congress.

Kolisch, who was at all times a resident of Paris, had repeatedly declared that he would not enter, on the ground that he was engaged in business on the stock exchange. However, one or two days before the tournament commenced he sounded me about the in the following manner: "What would you do," he asked, "if Morphy, Anderssen and Paulsen would now wish to compete in the Congress?" Of course I could easily see what he was driving at, and I answered substantially: "Neither you nor anybody else has a right to enter the tournament now without the unanimous consent of the competitors already inscribed according to the rules, but if either you or Morphy, Anderssen and Paulsen, or all, would wish to enter, I would give you my own vote rather than spoil the eclat of the tournament, and I have no doubt that all the other competitors would follow my example of waiving any personal interest."

The tournament had, however, actually commenced and, much to my astonishment, I must say, it was announced on the third day of play that Kolisch had paid his entrance fee to a member of the Committee, the late M. Lequesne. This was more than I had bargained for with my promise of support, as it gave the newcomer an enormous advantage over me, which he must have been well aware of. For by one of those extraordinary experiments which Tournament-Committees sometimes try it had been finally provided, though contrary to the original programme, that only the won games should count, while the drawn games should be simply subtracted from the total possible maximum without being played over again, or in other words, that the drawn games should count *AS LOST FOR BOTH PLAYERS*.

We all know now what unfair complications sometimes arise nowadays when the draws count only half for each party, and of course it was much worse in that tournament, especially when one of the strongest players of the day was allowed to enter after the score of some of the chief rivals had already been damaged by inferior players. To take only my own case, the effect was that, as I had already drawn against Czarnowsky, Kolisch had only to win both games against that player which he could make sure of, and to make even games against me, in order *TO KEEP AHEAD OF ME*, while I could *ONLY EQUALIZE* my score with his if I *BEAT HIM BOTH GAMES*. (Under such conditions I lost one and drew one against Kolisch subsequently.)

The matter caused a great discussion, and not alone some of the players, but also some members of the Committee were strenuously opposed to this late entrance of one of the most formidable opponents. However, it was ultimately brought to a vote among the competitors, and I led the way by supporting the admission of Kolisch into the tournament *ON THE FOURTH DAY OF PLAY*. All the other competitors followed suit with the exception of the late M. DeVere who entered his protest to the last, and as it turned out, he came out behind the prize winner, and his rights and interests were really affected by this breach of the programme. For the Committee overruled his objection contrary to the law and practice since firmly established in tournaments.

To sum up this case I challenge Chess history to find a similar instance where any chief rival in a tournament has acted better than I did on that occasion for my own part. Kolisch is now a baron and a millionaire, and he has often stated that his winning chief honors in the Paris Congress of 1867 was the first stepping stone to his fortune, and I think I may perhaps say that next to himself he owes that opportunity to my own forbearance and self denial.

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