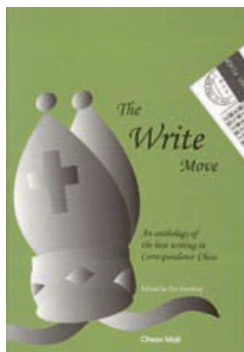




COLUMNISTS

The Kibitzer

Tim Harding



CHESSTHEATRE

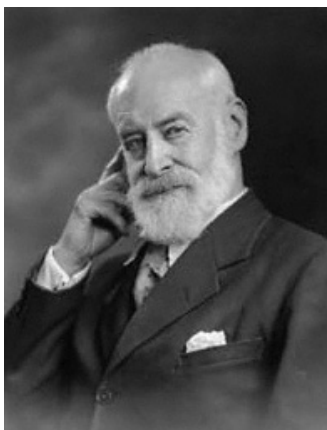
Play through and download the games from [ChessCafe.com](#) in the [DGT Game Viewer](#).

[The Complete DGT Product Line](#)

Tolstoy and his Biographer

It is quite well known that Leo Tolstoy, author of *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, liked to play chess. Less attention has been paid to his English biographer, Aylmer Maude, who was apparently the first person to edit a chess column in a Russian periodical. This article will deal with the chess adventures of both men, but primarily with that of Maude, since Tolstoy has been quite well investigated by Edward Winter in an online [article](#) that I will refer to below. After this article, it is probably over to Moscow readers to see what they can discover in archives there.

Two warnings before we continue: firstly, the games in this article are not of the highest quality, especially when you examine the tactics with a computer, but they were fairly typical of amateur play of the time: good ideas, dependent on the opening theory of the day, a propensity to attack, marred by miscalculations. Maude seemed especially to enjoy games in the Evans and King's Gambits, but not everybody played in that style. Secondly, this article does not attempt to explore all aspects of Maude's complex involvement with Tolstoy's ideas, such as Tolstoyan communities and their influence on Gandhi, which can be researched elsewhere.



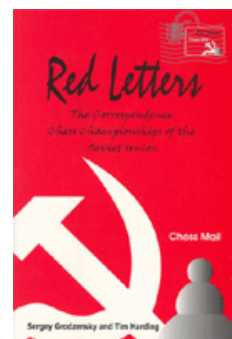
Aylmer Maude

Maude's closest association with Tolstoy, he said himself, was in connection with the book *What is Art?*. He also translated several other non-fiction works by the Russian, while his wife Louise mostly translated the fiction, starting with *Resurrection* in 1900. Aylmer Maude wrote quite a lot about Tolstoy and chess in his two-volume biography, which includes two games they played together. (A third appeared in *British Chess Magazine* in 1933.) Since Winter quotes extensively from the biography, I shall only include the most relevant extracts from that and present a somewhat different view. Instead I shall begin with the following passage that Winter does not cite, which includes an interesting chess analogy.

Check out these bestselling titles from [USCFSales.com](#):



[Deluxe Tournament Scorebook](#)



[Red Letters](#)
by Sergey Grodzensky & Tim Harding



[Passport Magnetic Travel Chess Set](#)



(From the Soviet Chess Encyclopaedia). This picture is not easy to find online. A large family group watches Leo Tolstoy playing chess at Yasnaya Polyana. Several of the people including his opponent are clearly in the next picture also and it may have been taken on the same day.

Maude's 'Recollections of Tolstoy', appeared in a special Tolstoy centenary number of *The Slavonic Review*: volume 7 (1928/9, pp. 475-481). Maude wrote:

My own acquaintance with him began towards the end of the eighteen-eighties, but I did not see much of him till the last years of my life in Moscow, when I had the good fortune to secure his cordial friendship. During the winters of 1895-96 and 1896-97 I went to see him almost every week. He sometimes visited my wife and myself, and he taught our boys to make paper cockerels—an art they have never lost. He took me for walks, and we went to the public baths together. When I visited him at Yasnaya Polyana we bathed in the little river that flows by the estate; we played tennis (at which he, a man of nearly seventy and thirty years my senior, beat me) and *bábki* (which remotely resembles skittles), and on one occasion we went an excursion, he on horseback and I on a bicycle. His agility and vigour were remarkable for a man of his age. He had at that time abandoned shoe-making, and I never saw him sow or reap, though I believe he still sometimes did such work even then. In the evening we often played chess, a game of which we both were fond. He also played *vint*, a card game (something like bridge).

His many-sidedness and keenness of interest about every-thing, as well as his gift of arresting expression, was constantly apparent. There is a striking difference between the talk of one who, like Tolstoy, has formed a clear idea of the purpose of human life and is actuated by it, and one who is at sea on that all-important matter. It resembles the difference between a game of chess played by an expert, with a logical sequence between the moves so that the purpose of even the most unexpected coups can be puzzled out, and a game of ordinary drawing-room chess in which the moves are a series of accidents mitigated by occasional ideas. This became more apparent as one grew familiar with the workings of his mind. At first one was tempted to suspect that he liked to be eccentric and to surprise people, but one found out later that even in his jests he always aimed at the elucidation of truth and the betterment of mankind.

As the *Oxford Dictionary of Biography* shows, Maude was born on 28 March 1858, in Ipswich, to Francis Henry Maude (a curate) and his wife Lucy. He lived to the age of eighty and an obituary notice appeared in *BCM* in 1938 (p. 452). I don't know if Aylmer was any relation to George Maude, a prominent member of the London Chess Club at the mid-century, or to the Conservative MP of recent times. Aylmer Maude first went to Moscow at the age of sixteen (presumably to study Russian language and literature, as he was at the Lyceum) and then *ODNB* shows he worked as an English tutor from 1877-80 and then went into business, working for a carpet company. (His Wikipedia entry says his introduction to the Russian carpet business was through a Scottish chess player, Archibald Mirrielees, but I should like independent confirmation of that.)



*Tolstoy plays chess with his son-in-law Michel Souhotine.
Watching are from left to right, his wife and their sons André and Michel.*

It is in 1877 that references to Maude as a chess player first appear in the English press, and he was particularly active in 1879-81 as we shall see below. He quite often sent in news and games to the *Illustrated London News* and other London chess organs. Here are two of the earliest published games by Maude, one by correspondence (the only one of those I have found) and one 'over-the-board'.

AG of St. Petersburg – Aylmer Maude

Russia, corr. 1878

Evans Gambit [C52]

Maude in Chess Player's Chronicle 1879 p.13; additional notes by Tim Harding.

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5 4 b4 Bxb4 5 c3 Ba5 6 0-0 Nf6 7 d4 0-0 8 dxe5 Nxe4 9 Qd3

'The *Handbuch* does not mention this move. Staunton recommends it, and gives the continuation 9...Nc5 10 Qd5 Ne6 11 Ba3 Re8 12 Re1 and White has a good game.'

9...d5?

'I think Black might very well play 10...d6, to be followed by 11...Be6, in most cases.'

10 Bxd5 Bf5 11 Bc4?

'11 Qc4 seems better. The probable continuation would be 11...Nxc3 12 Nxc3 Bxc3 13 Bxf7+ Rxf7 14 Qxc3 etc.'

TH: 13 Bxf7+ is unsound; White's correct line is 13 Bg5 Qd7 14 Rad1.

11...Nd6 12 Qe2 Nxc4 13 Rd1 Nd6

TH: 13...Qe7 14 Qxc4 Nxe5 15 Nxe5 Qxe5 may be better

14 exd6 cxd6 15 Ba3 Re8 16 Qc4?!

'White was afraid of Black playing ...Bg4, but it was certainly not wise to give up a pawn. He could have played Qb5 or Qd2.'

16...Re6 17 Nbd2 Qf6 18 Rac1 Rae8 19 Nf1 Be4 20 Nd4 Bb6 21 Ng3



21...Ne5!?

'I do not suppose this is really sound. The idea was to sacrifice the exchange, in order to get an attack on the kingside and to bring the knight into play.'



22 Qe2 Bc6 23 Qc2?

TH: Evidently Maude expected 23 Nxe6 Rxe6 (threatening ...Nf3+) 24 Qf1 Nc4!.

23...Bxd4 24 cxd4 Nf3+ 25 Kh1?

TH: 25 gxf3 Qxf3 26 d5 Bxd5 27 Rxd5 Qxd5 28 Bb4 covering e1; Black stands much better but the game goes on.

25...Re1+ 26 Nf1 Rxf1+

TH: 26...Nxd4 is stronger.

27 Rxf1 Qf4 28 Bxd6

'If 28 g3 Qh6 29 h4 Nxd4+ and 30...Nxc2 and wins.'

28...Qxd6 29 gxf3 Qf4 0-1

'If 29...Bxf3+ 30 Kg1 Qxd4 (or ...Qf6 or ...Qh6) 31 Qc7 and saves the game.'

Sytoff – Aylmer Maude

Moscow, 1877

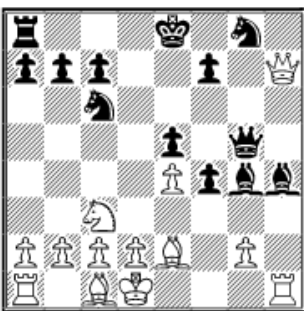
Kieseritsky Gambit [C39]

Illustrated London News vol. 71 (20 October 1877) p. 390.

1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf4 3 Nf3 g5 4 h4 g4 5 Ne5 Be7 6 Qxg4?

6 Nxg4 is correct.

6...d6 7 Qg7 Bxh4+ 8 Kd1 dxe5 9 Qxh8 Bg4+ 10 Be2 Qg5 11 Nc3 Nc6 12 Qxh7



12...Nh6 13 d3 Bxe2+ 14 Nxe2 Qxg2 15 Rg1 Qf2 16 Qxh6 f3 17 Qe3 fxe2+ 18 Qxe2 Qxg1+ 19 Kd2 Bg5+ 20 Qe3 Qxe3+ 21 Kd1 Qg1+ 22 Ke2 Nd4# 0-1

Before the Russian Revolution, St. Petersburg, not Moscow, was the capital of the Tsarist empire and chess was stronger there, with M. I. Chigorin emerging as one of the world's top players. One of the strongest players in

Moscow was the American-born Albert F. Hellwig (1829-85), whose surname cannot be accurately rendered in Russian. His name is given in some western books as 'Gelvig' (a straight transliteration from cyrillic) and sometimes quite incorrectly as 'Helving'. Grekov's book on Chigorin notes that he published the chess journal *Shakmaty* in Moscow from 1882; he played Chigorin several times by correspondence. (One of their encounters can be found in my book [Fifty Golden Chess Games.](#))

It seems likely that Hellwig was a valuable friend or mentor to Maude: being an older man, established in the Moscow business world and chess club and of course being a native English speaker. Exactly when they met is not clear, but as soon as Maude started going to the chess club he would have been likely to encounter the American and several games played between them were published. Probably Hellwig was the stronger player always, but sometimes Maude was able to defeat him. The following is just one of many published games between them.

Albert Hellwig – Aylmer Maude

Moscow, 1879

Bishop's Gambit [C33]

1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf4 3 Bc4 d5 4 Bxd5 Qh4+ 5 Kf1 g5 6 Nc3 Bg7 7 d4 Ne7 8 Nf3 Qh5 9 Kg1

The idea is h2-h4, but White never plays the follow-up.

9...Nbc6 10 Bxc6+ Nxc6



11 d5

If 11 Nb5 g4 12 Nxc7+ Ke7 13 Nxa8 gxf3 14 Qxf3 Bxd4+ 15 Kf1 Qxf3+ 16 gxf3 Bh3+ (Maude).

11...Ne5 12 Nb5 Nxf3+ 13 gxf3 Be5 14 d6 g4 15 Nxc7+ Kd8 16 d7 gxf3 17 dxc8Q+ Kxc8 18 Nxa8 0-1

‘As good as anything, for his game is past surgery. Black here announced mate in five moves.’

Lindenberg – Aylmer Maude

Moscow club, 1880

Evans Gambit [C52]

Notes by Steinitz, ‘The Field’ 20/11/1880.

This was described as Herr Lindenberg v. Maude, ‘one of the strongest players resident in Russia’.

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5 4 b4 Bxb4 5 c3 Ba5 6 0-0 Nf6 7 d4 0-0 8 Ba3 d6 9 dxe5 Nxe4 10 Qb3

10 Qc2 is best.

10...Bb6 11 e6? fxe6 12 Bxe6+ Kh8 13 Bd5 Nxf2

Very good style. By proper play it should lead to victory.

14 Rxf2 Bxf2+ 15 Kxf2 Qh4+ 16 Kg1



16...Rxf2!

Very fine indeed. Mr. Maude shows genius in the manner of conducting the attack.

17 gxf3 Bh3 18 Qd1 Re8 19 Be4 Qg5+?

19...Ne5 20 Nd2 Nd3 21 Qe2 Nf4 22 Qe3 Re5+.

20 Kf2 Qg2+ 21 Ke3 d5 22 Qxd5

Better 22 Nd2.

22...Rd8?

22...Qg1+ 23 Kf4 (23 Ke2 Qf1+) 23...h6 and wins.

23 Qh5 Qg1+ 24 Kf4



24...Qxh2+? 1/2-1/2

Drawn by perpetual check. Maude saw



the possibility 24...g5+, but decided it was too risky after 25 Qxg5 Rf8+ 26 Bxf8 Qc1+ 27 Kg3 Qxg5+ 28 Kxh3. Steinitz correctly saw Black would win here with 28...Nd8.

Maude played in tournaments sometimes. The *ILN* of 31 July 1880

reported on a Moscow club tournament won by Aleksandr Vladimirovich Solovtsov, the strongest player in Moscow, ahead of Hellwig, Mouratov, and Maude in that order. In an 1881 event, Hellwig and Maude finished joint third behind Dournovo and E. von Schmidt (*ILN* 5 August 1882), but I am not sure if Solovtsov was playing this time. Maude beat one of the winners in a game published in the paper later that year, but it is unclear whether it was in the competition.

Aylmer Maude – A. V. Solovtsov

Moscow, 1880

Ruy Lopez [C84]

ILN vol. 76 (10 April 1880) p. 359

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 d4 exd4 6 0–0 Be7 7 e5 Ne4 8 Nxd4 Nc5 9 Nf5!

TH: This was possibly a novelty. I have not found an earlier game with the move yet.

9...0–0

9...Nxa4 10 Nxg7+ Kf8 11 Bh6 Kg8 12 Ne6 dxe6 13 Qg4+ Bg5 14 Bxg5 Nxe5 15 Qg3 and wins (Maude). Sometimes Black tried 9...Ne6 in later years.

10 Qg4 Ne6



TH: 10...g6 was usually played in later years.

11 Nxg7?!

‘11 Qg3 is more attacking,’ wrote Maude, but White should safeguard his e-pawn by playing 11 Bxc6 dxc6 12 Rd1 Bd7 13 Bh6.

11...Nxe5

‘The correct answer. If 11...Nxg7 12 Bh6 Bg5 13 Bxg5 Nxe5 14 Bxd8 Nxg4 15 Bxc7 and White has won a pawn.’ True, but 12...Bf6 is a bit better.

12 Nxe6+ Nxg4 13 Nxd8 Rxd8 14 Bf4 c5 15 c3 d5 16 Re1 Be6 17 Nd2 d4 18 h3 Nf6 19 Bb3 Nd5 20 Bxd5 Rxd5 21 Re5 dxc3 22 Rxd5



22...cxb2?

‘Black has been playing very well, and has acquired some advantage in position; here, however, 22...Bxd5 would have been stronger than the move in the text.’

23 Re1 Bxd5 24 Rxe7 Rd8

TH: 24...f6 to deny the bishop the use of e5.

25 Bc7 Rc8 26 Be5 c4 27 Bc3 b5 28 Re5 Be6 29 Rg5+ Kf8 30 Bb4+

This forces the exchange of rooks, and Black is then unable to win with his pawns.

30...Ke8 31 Rg8+ Kd7 32 Rxc8 Kxc8 33 Bc3 b4 34 Bxb4 Bf5 35 Bc3 b1Q+ 36 Nxb1 Bxb1 37 a3 ½-½

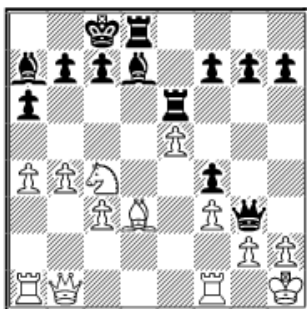
Dournovo – Aylmer Maude

Moscow, 1882

Center Game [C22]

ILN vol. 81 (4 November 1882) p. 482.

1 e4 e5 2 d4 exd4 3 Qxd4 Nc6 4 Qe3 Bb4+ 5 c3 Ba5 6 Qg3 Qf6 7 Bf4 d6 8 Bb5 Qg6 9 Ne2 Bd7 10 Nd2 Bb6 11 0-0 Nf6 12 Kh1 0-0-0 13 f3? Nh5 14 Qe1 a6 15 Bd3 Ne5 16 Bxe5 dxe5 17 Qb1 Nf4 18 Nxf4 exf4 19 Nc4 Ba7 20 a4 Rhe8 21 b4 Re6 22 e5 Qg3!?



Threatening ...Qxh2+ and ...Rh6 mate.

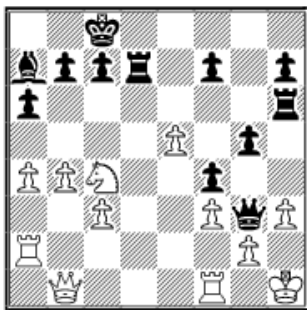
TH: The flashy move gives White the chance to create a defence, so 22...Qh5! is correct.

23 Bf5 Rh6 24 h3

24 Bh3 Bxh3.

24...g6 25 Bxd7+ Rxd7 26 Ra2 g5

27 b5?



TH: 27 Qf5! would have saved the game. Duffy wrote in the *ILN* that it would be met by 27...Rh5 'and the subsequent of the advance of the Kt's and B's pawns'. This is nonsense because of 28 Rd2 winning immediately. Therefore, Black's correct play would be 27...g4! 28 Qxg4 (if 28 Rd2?? Rxh3+ forces mate) 28...Rc6, but he has little or

no advantage.

27...g4 28 fxg4 f3 29 Rxf3 Rxh3+ 30 gxh3 Qxf3+ 31 Rg2 Rd1+ 0-1

In the autumn of 1880, Maude went back to England for a visit that probably lasted several weeks; the *ILN* of 23 October mentioned he was then in London. Maude took the opportunity to play chess. On 22 January 1881, one of Duffy's notes to correspondents said to 'A. M., Moscow: 'We were glad to note your successful play during your brief sojourn among us.' The *ILN* of 21 May 1881 published the following game against Zukertort; afterwards Maude wrote in to say this was just one of three casual games they had played, Zukertort winning the others (*ILN* 11 June).

Aylmer Maude – Johannes Zukertort

Offhand game, London 1880

Ponziani Opening [C44]

ILN vol. 79 (21 May 1881) p.510

'Played in London between Mr Aylmer Maude, of Moscow, and Herr Zukertort'.

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 c3

Maude wisely avoids gambits against the greatest tactician and

theoretician of the day. He lets Zukertort offer material instead.

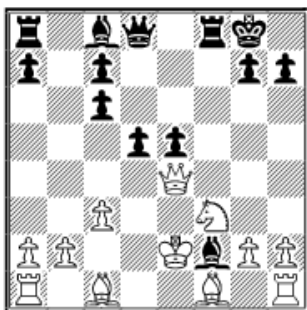
3...Nf6 4 d4 Nxe4 5 d5 Bc5

‘This fine counter-stroke is, we believe, the invention of Mr G. B. Fraser of Dundee.’

6 dxc6 Bxf2+ 7 Ke2 bxc6

‘Black may also play 7...d5 without disadvantage. The move in the text is generally considered slightly inferior.’

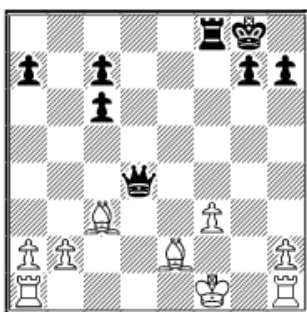
8 Qa4 f5 9 Nbd2 0–0 10 Nxe4 fxe4 11 Qxe4 d5



12 Qxe5

‘Most of the analysts concur in the opinion that this coup, giving up Queen for Rook and Bishop, is better than retreating the queen to R 4th or B 2nd.’

12...Re8 13 Qxe8+ Qxe8+ 14 Kxf2 Bg4 15 Bd3 Qh5 16 Bd2 Rf8 17 Be2 d4 18 cxd4 Qh4+ 19 Kf1 Bxf3 20 gxf3 Qxd4 21 Bc3



Black, it is likely enough, anticipated this move when he advanced the P to d4. White cannot now do better than force the draw at once, or remain with both rooks out of play for the rest of the game.

21...Qg4 22 Rg1 Rxf3+ 23 Bxf3 Qxf3+ ½–½ Drawn by perpetual check.

Maude was by now clearly a strong player and had he been in London

regularly, he would probably have ranked as one of the city’s leading amateurs. The *ILN* of 22 October 1881 mentioned the start of his column, which unfortunately I have not seen. But it printed the title wrongly as ‘Tritel’. It was actually *Zritel*, which means ‘onlooker’ or ‘spectator’, the latter being the title of a famous London weekly that was perhaps the model for this journal. *Zritel* was an illustrated paper published in Moscow; Duffy wrote that in *ILN* that it ‘commenced a few weeks ago a series of articles comprising games, problems and news of the chess world, edited by Mr Aylmer Maude... an Englishman whose skilful chess play is well known to our readers’. The column perhaps did not run for long; the late Ken Whyld’s *Chess Columns: A List* gives no further details.

After early 1882, Maude’s chess activities seem to decline, and I found no game published in England in 1883 although there was one in 1884. He married on 7 August 1884, his bride being the daughter of a Moscow-based businessman, and four children soon followed. Family and business life now took his time and, the same year his first child was born, the death of Hellwig probably meant the loss of his regular opponent.

It was ‘one winter day in 1887’ (although the *Oxford Dictionary of Biography* says 1888) that Maude says he was first introduced to Tolstoy, ‘with whose works I was at that time only superficially acquainted’. This encounter did not immediately make an impact on his life, but he was ‘struck by the life and animation of the party’ and had a chance to speak with the writer alone. In the second volume, Maude recalled:

I had left England when I was sixteen. Since then so much of my time and energy had been absorbed in earning my bread and butter that, till the time came when I knew him well, my outlook had been

a narrow one and I knew comparatively little of the movements of Russian life and thought. His writings and conversation came as something fresh and immensely inspiring. I stepped out into a world of new interests; and this happened just when the business I was managing had got into smooth water.

Now he had enough money and more leisure, but chess was no longer a main part of Maude's life. He does however seem to have played regularly with Tolstoy as a recreation when they met, and also lawn tennis at which Tolstoy was extremely quick although he 'played it merely as a recreation, not – as it is so often played in England – as one of life's serious duties.' Chess, too, he played as a recreation, not a serious study, not looking at books but 'he displayed originality and great alertness'.



Tolstoy playing chess with the son of his friend and publisher Vladimir Chertkov, who took this picture in Yasnaya Polyana in 1907.

During the winters 1895-6 and 1896-7, Maude saw Tolstoy almost every week. Having come under the prophet's influence, Maude 'violently swung from my former habits... From being a frequent attendant at the chess club, I forswore it as a luxury and waste of time'. However, this was perhaps only in 1896, since he writes that when Lasker and Steinitz came to Moscow to play their second match, somebody suggested going to watch and Tolstoy agreed, but Maude talked him out of it, which he afterwards regretted. 'I objected, on the score that professional chess, with its jealousies and bickerings and its diversion of ability to the service of a mere game, was contrary to the trend of his teaching.' It was that year when Maude first translated one of Tolstoy's works.

There are several pictures of Tolstoy playing chess, as well as anecdotes. As Winter points out, one of the stories in Maude's biography actually refers to a visit by Nicholas Tolstoy (the novelist's brother) in Germany to the Russian writer Ivan Turgenev, who was probably a keener and stronger player than Leo Tolstoy, and was just an account sent to Maude by a witness. Later, in 1878, Turgenev visited the Tolstoy estate in Yasnaya Polyana and played chess with the novelist's fifteen-year-old son Sergei, only winning with some difficulty. Turgenev was conversing with the family at the start of the game and then had to concentrate to avoid losing. 'In Paris I often used to play chess and was considered a good player. They called me *le chevalier de pion*. I am fond of pawns...'

Some of Sergei Tolstoy's later games have been incorrectly attributed to his father. Around 1900, played in the tenth correspondence tournament of the *Shakhmatny Zhurnal* and the fifth tournament of *Novoye Vremya*, beating some strong opponents. (A footnote on page 381 of Maude's first volume says that later Sergei Tolstoy beat Chigorin in a correspondence game, which unfortunately does not survive.) The *Illustrated London News* published the following game (vol. 117, 22 Dec. 1900, p. 950): 'Chess by correspondence. Game played in Russia between Mr S. Lebeder [sic] and Count Tolstoi'. The chess editor who made this mistake was J. W. Abbott.

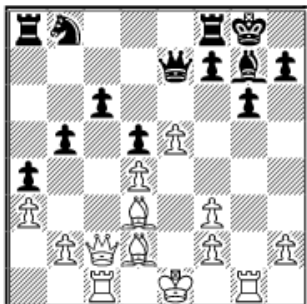
Sergey Fedorovich Lebedev – Sergei L. Tolstoy

Russia, corr. 1900

Queen's Gambit Accepted [D25]

First published in *Novoe Vremya*, according to my information: 21 September 1900, page 5, but I have not seen it there myself.

**1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 e3 Bg4 5 Bxc4 e6 6 Qb3 Bxf3 7 gxf3 b6
8 Rg1 c6 9 Nc3 b5 10 Be2 a5 11 Bd2 g6 12 Rc1 a4 13 Qc2 Nd5 14
Nxd5 exd5 15 e4 Bg7 16 e5 0-0 17 Bd3 Qe7 18 a3**



18...Bxe5?!

18...Qh4 is sounder.

19 dxe5 Qxe5+ 20 Kf1 Qxh2 21 Bxg6?

An unwise attempt to counter-attack, presumably overlooking the strength of the reply.

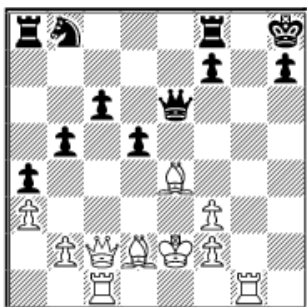
21...Qh3+!

21...hxg6?? 22 Rxc6+ and mates.

22 Ke2 Qe6+?!

A risky winning attempt. 22...fxg6 23 Rxc6+ Kf7 is about equal.

23 Be4+ Kh8



24 Qc3+?

White misses the decisive brilliancy 24 Bh6!! Qxh6 25 Rh1.

24...f6 25 Bh6 Rf7 26 Rg4

26 Rgd1! and White still stands somewhat better as the bishop cannot be captured yet.

26...Nd7 27 Rcg1 Ne5!

Tolstoy junior shows some class; he spurns the bishop and plays for more complications.

28 Qa5?!

Flashy, but not the best defence.

28...Rfa7 29 Rg8+?

29 Rg7! was the last chance. 29...dxe4 30 Rxa7 Qc4+! 31 Kd1 and there is still some play although Black should win.

29...Rxc8 30 Qxa7 Ng6 31 Rg4 dxe4 32 Rxe4 Ne5

With a clear extra pawn, safer king and more active pieces.

**33 Qd4 Nxf3!? 34 Kxf3 Qh3+ 35 Ke2 Qxh6 36 Re6 Qh5+ 37 Kd2 Qg5
+ 38 Kc3? Qc1+ 39 Kd3? Qd1+ 0-1**

Winter's article also quotes the following passage from the May 1897 *BCM*, which is referred to in some chess columns, e.g. the *Dublin*

Evening Mail of 1 April. It seems far more likely that this also refers to Sergei Tolstoy's family, but independent verification from a Russian source would be invaluable:

Count Tolstoy, who is now staying at St Petersburg, is said to be devoting himself enthusiastically to the study of chess. It is reported that he and his wife and children are playing as if their lives depended on the results. The tables in the various rooms are marked out as chess boards, and the dogs and other pets are named after the chess pieces. This sort of thing of course cannot last.

Tolstoy senior was unlikely to have taken a house in the capital, and all other accounts say he did not study the game in books.

Although Maude and his family left Russia for England in 1897, their contacts with the Tolstoy family actually increased in the early 1900s. It seems they were reckoned to have done a good job on *What is Art?* and *Resurrection* and were engaged to do more translations, as well as the official biography. This involved Aylmer Maude in several visits to Yasnaya Polyana in the years up to the writer's death in 1910, and three chess games played between them were published. At one point, around 1901, Tolstoy's health was so bad he gave up chess, but after making a recovery, he resumed playing. In 1906, he was able to win a game from Maude using the unsound Salvio Gambit. 'He had, it turned out, picked it up from a friend who had recently played it on him. I knew nothing about that opening, and made a very poor fight of it.'

It seems to me that Tolstoy shows an excellent sense of proportion in his way of playing chess. He does it well enough to make and to enjoy combinations, but he never sacrifices social family life for the sake of the game. Anyone may interrupt him while he is playing, and he talks and jests so that no-one who only knew the game at Yasnaya would consider chess unsocial. Previously I (who had made some study of the game) used generally to beat him; but on this occasion he won two games from me very rapidly.

We conclude with Maude's three known games against Tolstoy.

Leo Tolstoy – Aylmer Maude

Yasnaya Polyana, 1906

Salvio Gambit [C37]

Maude's life of Tolstoy, appendix to volume 2.

Games played, as these were, rapidly, amid conversation, and when one of the players had been travelling all the preceding night, cannot have much interest as specimens of good chess. But as showing the kind of skittle game a great writer who only plays when he is too tired to work, played at the age of seventy-eight and eighty-one, they may be worth recording. In the first game, played in 1906, Tolstoy, who knows nothing of the Chess books, took me quite by surprise by playing the Salvio Gambit. He had, it turned out, picked it up from a friend who had recently played it on him. I knew nothing about that opening, and made a very poor fight of it.

1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf3 3 Nf3 g5 4 Bc4 g4 5 Ne5 Qh4+ 6 Kf1 d5 7 Bxd5 f3 8 gxf3 Qh3+ 9 Ke1 g3 10 d4 g2?

If instead of this, Black had played 10...Qg2 he should have won easily.

11 Rg1 Qh4+? 12 Ke2 Nh6 13 Rxd2 c6 14 Bxh6 cxd5 15 Bxf8 Kxf8 16 Qe1 Qe7

Being two pawns behind, Black dared not exchange queens, and so allowed the entrance of White's queen into the game a couple of moves later, which settled matters at once.

17 Nc3 f6? 18 Nxd5 Qd6 19 Qg3 fxe5 20 Qg7+ Ke8 21 Qxh8+ and wins 1-0

Aylmer Maude – Leo Tolstoy

Yasnaya Polyana, 1909

Ruy Lopez [C70]

Maude biography of Tolstoy, volume 2

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 b5 5 Bb3 Nf6?

This is a dangerous move, now that the white bishop's at Kt3, commented Maude.

6 Ng5 d5 7 exd5



7...Nxd5?

The correct move is 7...Nd4! as in Simeon Scott v Tim Harding, British under-16 ch, Whitby 1964, giving Black counterplay very like the Fritz Variation of the Two Knights Defence!

8 Nxf7

Now the comparison is with the Two Knights Defence, Fegatello Attack (3 Bc4 Nf6 4 Ng5 d5 5 exd5 Nxd5 6 Nxf7).

8...Kxf7 9 Qf3+ Ke6 10 Nc3 Ncb4

'White has already a practically won game, and the only question is how quickly can he force matters to a conclusion.'

11 a3 Bb7



Gives back the piece to no effect. 11...c5 would be a better try to take advantage of ...b5 having been played.

12 axb4 Ra7? 13 Qg4+ Kd6 14 Ne4+ Kc6 15 Qe6+ Bd6 16 Bxd5+ Kb6 17 Bxb7 Rxb7 18 d3 Ka7 19 Be3+ Kb8 20 Rxa6 Re8 21 Qa2 c6 22 Ra8+ Kc7 23 Qa5+ Kd7 24 Rxd8+ 'and wins' 1-0

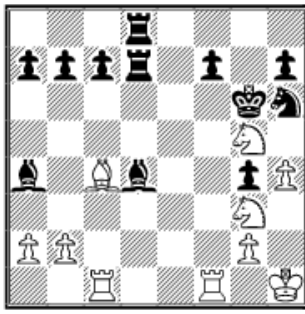
Leo Tolstoy – Aylmer Maude

Yasnaya Polyana, 1909

King's Gambit [C38]

BCM February 1933 p. 70

1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf4 3 Nf3 g5 4 Bc4 Bg7 5 h4 g4 6 Ng5 Nh6 7 d4 0-0 8 Bxf4 d6 9 Nc3 Nc6 10 e5? dxe5 11 dxe5 Nxe5 12 Qxd8 Rxd8 13 Bxe5 Bxe5 14 0-0 Bf5 15 Rael Bd4+ 16 Kh1 Rd7 17 Nd5 Kg7 18 Nf4 Rad8 19 Nh5+ Kg6 20 Ng3 Bxc2 21 Rcl Ba4



22 Rf4? Be3 23 Bd3+ Rxd3 24 Rxa4
Bxc1 25 Ra5 Rd1+ 26 Kh2 Bf4 27
N5e4 Re1 28 Ra4 Rdd1 29 Nf2 Bd6 30
Nxd1 Rxd1 'and wins' 0-1

© 2008 Tim Harding. All Rights Reserved.

 [TOP OF PAGE](#)

 [HOME](#)

 [COLUMNS](#)

 [LINKS](#)

 [ARCHIVES](#)

 [ABOUT THE
CHESS CAFE](#)

[\[ChessCafe Home Page\]](#) [\[Book Review\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#)
[\[Endgame Study\]](#) [\[The Skittles Room\]](#) [\[Archives\]](#)
[\[Links\]](#) [\[Online Bookstore\]](#) [\[About ChessCafe.com\]](#) [\[Contact Us\]](#)

© 2008 CyberCafes, LLC. All Rights Reserved.
"ChessCafe.com®" is a registered trademark of Russell Enterprises, Inc.