



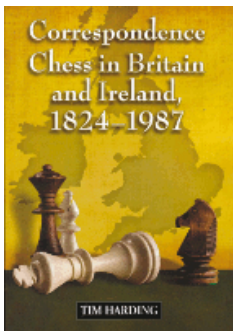
COLUMNISTS

The Kibitzer

Tim Harding



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The Double Life of Adolphus Zytogorski

Part One

Over the last few weeks I have been working extremely hard to complete the text of my next book for McFarland, *Eminent Victorian Chess-Players*, which I hope will be published in 2012. This features biographical essays (including games and visual illustrations) of ten major figures in nineteenth century British chess, with short digressions about their principal opponents and other leading characters.

Inevitably, some of the interesting material which I researched and wrote up had to be discarded to prevent the book becoming unbalanced and too long. One of the lesser players whose story had to be greatly trimmed was Adolf (or Adolphus) Zytogorski. Possibly most readers have never heard of him, though he has the distinction of being the final entry in two alphabetically-arranged works of reference: Jeremy Gaige's [Chess Personalia](#) and Frederic Boase's *Modern English Biography* (Volume 3), which was published in the early 1900s (and where his name is incorrectly spelled "Zytagorski, Adolphe."

Part of my methodology for the book was to use the Ancestry website to seek personal details about players mentioned in the book and sometimes in this way I made contact with relatives or descendants of the subjects and was able to exchange information with them. One of my most fruitful exchanges of this type was with English teacher Mike Roy Read, who is descended from a sister of Zytogorski's second wife, and he has agreed to the publication of this article in the hope that some readers (most likely in Poland or elsewhere on the European continent) may be able to provide relevant information to add to the story. While I concentrated on the chess, Mike has made some excellent, even astonishing, discoveries about Zytogorski which are revealed this month and next. The findings in these articles are really a co-operative effort.

At this stage, the one thing we are sadly lacking is any photograph or other likeness of Zytogorski and we should very much like to find one. Several questions arising from our researches will be listed at the end next month.

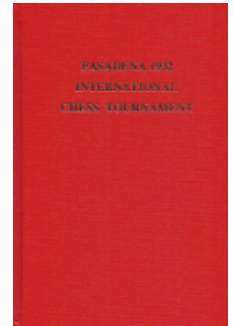
Who was Zytogorski?

Zytogorski was Polish (or at least half-Polish) and is usually said to have been born in 1807 but it was probably somewhat later than that. His surname would apparently be pronounced Zhyto-goorski in Poland. He came to England in the 1830s at an unknown date; he had certainly arrived by 1837. Zytogorski died in London in March 1882, about twenty years after he ceased active chess-playing.

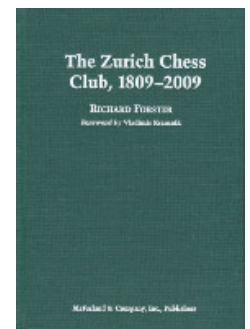
There is evidence from games and results that in the mid- and late-1850s he was then one of the strongest players in England. He was certainly not in Staunton's class (but by then Staunton had almost retired), while Elijah Williams had died in 1854 and both Bird and Horwitz were inactive at that period. Zytogorski was somewhat weaker than Harrwitz (who anyway went to France during 1854) and Löwenthal, but he was not much inferior to Falkbeer, and was stronger than Brien (editor of the *Chess Player's Chronicle* after Staunton) and others with whom he played regularly.

Little information about Zytogorski is freely available online. There is a short Wikipedia article about him but it is entirely derivative and not wholly accurate. The fullest text article previously about Zytogorski appeared in *Quarterly for Chess History* with an article by Tomasz Lissowski entitled "[The Greatest One Before Winawer?](#)" (meaning greatest Polish player). In the printed version, the *Quarterly's* editor Vlastimil Fiala added a selection of

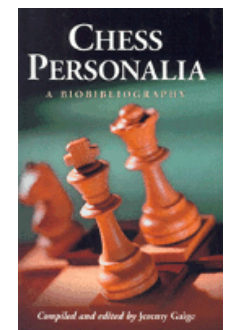
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Zytogorski's games; the ones presented this month and next are largely different. Fiala also adds some comments that I do not entirely agree with. He writes, for example "after his arrival in London at the turn of 1830–1831" but there is nothing to prove it was as early as that. You can read Lissowski's part of the article for yourself online (see link above). It includes a shortened version of the *British Chess Magazine* obituary, though with minor mistakes in the text, which is quoted in full below.

There is no mention of Zytogorski in the chess press before 1841 that I have been able to discover. In ChessBase's [Mega Database 2011](#), twenty games by Zytogorski can be found, most of them being from a tournament in 1855, and none played before 1851 although he is also known to have been an active player in 1841/42 at Goode's European Cigar Divan and Chess Rooms, at 39 Ludgate Hill, where Staunton was a regular and played many of his games with John Cochrane. It would probably be possible to collect at least fifty of Zytogorski's game-scores from all sources, including consultation games and games at odds.

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Application Number COL013494

REGISTRATION DISTRICT: Hackney
1882 DEATH in the Sub-district of Hackney in the County of Middlesex

No.	When and where died	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of death	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar
100	27th Feb 1882 German Hospital	Adolph Zytogorski	M	75	Retired	Heart Disease	Resident of 100, Dalston Road, Dalston, London, E. 8. Informant: Edward Howard, 172, Dalston Road, Dalston, London, E. 8.	28th Feb 1882	Thomas Howard

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The death certificate of Zytogorski.

[\[Click here to enlarge image.\]](#)

Obituary in B.C.M. 1882

The death of Zytogorski was noticed in a few chess publications but only *B.C.M.* gave a lengthy obituary article, on pages 141-2 of its second (1882) volume. Rev. William Wayte wrote the longest obituary which Lissowski summarises and some of which is quoted below. Throughout, Wayte gave the incorrect spelling Zytogorski. For Poles, the correct ending is "i" not "y." So, I have changed that, and there are accents on some of the letters which were never used in England. Here are some extracts from the obituary.

"In Adolph Zytogorski there has passed away a player of considerable eminence, who but for adverse circumstances would have achieved a far higher reputation among the masters of the game. His name has been for many years so little before the public that it may even be unknown to the younger generation: yet it is one of those which ought not to be altogether forgotten.

Mr. Zytogorski died on the 27th of February in the German Hospital, Dalston, at the age of 75. He was one of the numerous band of Polish refugees who, after the ill-starred rising of 1831, overspread the capitals of Western Europe. Like too many of his fellow-exiles, he passed his long life in poverty and obscurity."

"If Fortune was unkind to Zytogorski, it is but fair to Fortune to say that he had opportunities of bettering himself which he was too much of a Bohemian to turn to account. He is believed to have passed the greater part of the last half-century in England, but was occasionally heard of in Germany."

"In the earliest volumes of the *Chess Player's Chronicle*, 1841-2, a few of his games are recorded; and he contributed a valuable analysis of the problem of Rook and Bishop against Rook, partly reproduced in

Staunton's *Handbook*. . . He was, indeed, a master alike of the theory and practice of end-games. . ."

"In 1843 he played a match with Staunton, then at the height of his strength and reputation, receiving Pawn and two moves, and won six games right off the reel. . . Staunton suppressed all mention of this match; and, as long as he controlled the chess organs, nothing more was heard of the winner. . . Zytogorski was befriended by the late Mr. Brien, who succeeded Staunton as Editor of the *Chronicle* in 1854-56; and Brien, after his quarrel with Staunton, published for the first time the particulars of the above match. . . Many of his games appear in this series of C. P. C., as well as in the next which followed after an interval in 1859-62; but for the last twenty years we have scarcely met with his name in the public prints. . . Zytogorski, if he had been in a position to assert himself, would unquestionably have taken a high place among the masters of European reputation."

Comments on Wayte's article

The first point to note in the above is that the death certificate indeed proves that Zytogorski died in a London hospital for German speakers. Probably German was his mother tongue and further reasons to believe that are stated below. However, it can also be noted that he was certified as dying on 28 February 1882, instead of the 27 February given in all chess sources. (In my book I point out many discrepancies of this sort.)

The most important detail is that the certificate says he was seventy, contradicting Wayte's statement that Zytogorski was seventy-five-years old. Was this a misprint in *B.C.M.* or did Wayte have some evidence for that age? The *Chess-Monthly* also said seventy-five but one magazine may have copied the other. Philip Sergeant in *A Century of British Chess* and more recently Gaige's *Chess Personalia* also said seventy-five but Wayte was probably the source of all the various accounts (including the *Oxford Companion to Chess*, page twenty-four in the first edition) stating 1807 as Zytogorski's year of birth. I have even seen January 1806 suggested but without any evidence; if that was right, he would have been seventy-six at death. Unless firm evidence turns up for Zytogorski being seventy-five, we should assume that the certificate, being an official record, is correct.

The certificate and census information, although incomplete, tend to corroborate each other to show that Zytogorski was probably born in 1811 or 1812. Although there is some variation in the various censuses where he appears, but none would accord with birth in 1807, still less in 1806. In the 1841 census he is said to be thirty. Then he was listed as thirty-eight in the 1851 census and as forty-nine in 1861. We have not found him in the 1871 or 1881 censuses yet. Possibly he was abroad or using another name (as in 1851 and 1861), or his unusual surname may have been transcribed incorrectly (as in 1841) and so not found in searches.

Commenting on what Wayte had written, W. N. Potter added in his *Land and Water* column, "That Staunton acted in a spirit of oppressive injustice towards Zytogorski is made abundantly clear." Potter also remembered that Zytogorski "had no taste for what is called respectability." The word "Bohemian" at this time meant somebody of an artistic mien and unconventional behaviour. Evidently there was much about Zytogorski that Wayte perhaps did not know, or at least did not say. It is hard to know what he was hinting it when he referred to the Bohemianism and the spurning of opportunities. Did Wayte mean alcoholism? Revolutionary activity? Sexual irregularities? All of the above?

In fact as will be shown below, Zytogorski also used another name and had a double life, but for chess he only used his original name and probably the chess world never knew about his other identity which Mike Roy Read has uncovered.

Family Life

According to two censuses, he was born in Transylvania, which raises further

questions as that region in the Carpathians has never, so far as I am aware, been part of Polish territory. Now it is in Romania but that was a twentieth century change. In Zytogorski's day there was no independent state of Poland; it was divided between the Tsarist and Austro-Hungarian empires and Prussia. Transylvania was then a region of the Austro-Hungarian empire directly administered from Budapest, suggesting that his father may have been a merchant or an Austro-Hungarian government official posted there. Perhaps the family were not there long and he spent most of his childhood in Poland. Why would he have been involved in the Polish rebellion if he did not have a personal connection with Poland?

The main reason that Zytogorski did not avail of the Tsar's offer of an amnesty in 1844, which would have enabled him to return to that part of Poland, was that he had put down firm roots in England and had a family. His eldest child was three-years-old in 1841, so he was certainly in England by 1837. John Townsend, in his book *Notes on Howard Staunton* (which I discussed in an earlier column), correctly allowed for errors in recording foreign names and made an educated guess that has been proved correct, when he identified them in the 1841 census. There they appear as "Adolph Zagorski," a thirty-year-old Pole of independent means, living with "Henretta Zagorski", aged twenty, and a three-year-old son, Agenor. Informed by me about this, Mike made a series of revealing discoveries about this first Mrs. Zytogorski. Harriet Eliza Humphryes was born in Lambeth about 1821, the daughter of Thomas and Harriet Augusta Mary Humphryes, but her father must have died when she was quite young and her mother remarried. Her stepfather was a Polish immigrant, Jacob Pitichowski, so it now seems likely that Zytogorski met her through him.

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Application Number 3471744-1

REGISTRATION DISTRICT: STRAND
 1848 BIRTH in the Sub-district of St Anne Westminster in the County of Middlesex

No.	When and where born	Name of mother	Name and address of father	Name, address and quality or rank of mother	Signature of father	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of witness	Name and rank of officiating minister
263	Adolph Victor Zytogorski 1848 St Anne Westminster	Harriet Eliza Humphryes	Alfred Victor Zytogorski 1848 St Anne Westminster	Alfred Victor Zytogorski 1848 St Anne Westminster	Alfred Victor Zytogorski 1848 St Anne Westminster	Alfred Victor Zytogorski 1848 St Anne Westminster	1848	Alfred Victor Zytogorski 1848 St Anne Westminster	Alfred Victor Zytogorski 1848 St Anne Westminster

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The birth certificate of Alfred Victor Zytogorski, the second son, born 1848.
[\[Click here to enlarge image.\]](#)

Adolphus and Harriet had four children, of whom the eldest (Agenor) cannot be traced after 1861. He would have been an adult and could well have gone to the continent or America. The other three were Vanda (1843-1923), Alfred Victor (1848-1925), and Clementina (1854-1940). The daughters never married but Alfred married Lucy Browning (1851-1918) and they had three children. Mike found a birth and marriage certificate for Alfred and death certificates for Vanda and Clementina, as well as for Harriet Eliza Zytogorski, who died aged ninety on 18 February 1913 in Ilford, Essex.

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GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE

Application Number: COL3388

REGISTRATION DISTRICT					PARISH				
1838 DEATH in the Sub-district of Seneca Town					in the County of Middlesex				
No.	Witnessed that died	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of death	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of register
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									

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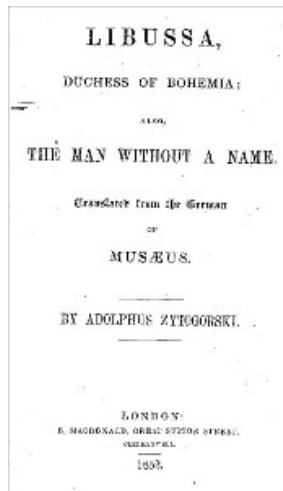
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The death certificate of Zytogorski's second wife, Maria.
[\[Click here to enlarge image.\]](#)

His name change can also be traced through his literary work. Between the late 1840s and 1852, at least three books of folk tales by the Weimar professor Johann Carl August Musaeus (1735-87) were published in London, in which Adolphus Zytogorski is named as the translator. Musaeus was a precursor of the brothers Grimm in collecting popular tales from the lips of the peasantry.



Cover image of one of the books of folk tales he translated.

After Mike Roy Read told me about the Hanstein name, I ordered up every book at the British library which is attributed in their catalogue either to Zytogorski or Hanstein, and I was able to make comparisons. That library does not however have the earliest translation which was probably the first edition of *The Chronicle of the Three Sisters* by Musaeus, translated by Zytogorski. The J. F. initials on three of the later translations may have been a printer's misreading of manuscript "J. T." Mike provided a screenshot of the 1852 *Libussa* translation showing the name of Zytogorski, perhaps the last time (until he met Maria) that he used this name except for chess.

Between 1855 and 1866, further translations from Musaeus and other writers appeared, but now the name of J. T. Hanstein or J. F. Hanstein appears. The reprint of *Libussa*, is exactly the same as the 1852 Zytogorski edition except for the title page.

CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF DEATH
GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE
Application Number: 2375066-1

REGISTRATION DISTRICT: ROMFORD
DEATH in the Sub-district of HOME in the County of Essex

No.	Where and when died	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of death	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of register
07	At home of Harriet Zyrogorski, 125, 1/2, Broad St. Romford	Harriet Zyrogorski (nee Hanstein)	Female	30	Housewife	Apoplexy	By Harriet Zyrogorski, 125, 1/2, Broad St. Romford	1881	James Hanstein

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DVD 078036

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The death certificate of Zytogorski's first wife, Harriet.
[\[Click here to enlarge image.\]](#)

His two elder daughters seem to have had different loyalties. Clementina used the surname Hanstein but on the death certificate of her elder sister is written "Vanda Zytogorski otherwise Hanstein, daughter of Adolphus Zytogorski (deceased) an Interpreter." It may have been because of Vanda that Harriet's death certificate also bears the principal surname Zytogorski, but also mentioning Hanstein.

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GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE
Application Number: 3379185-1

REGISTRATION DISTRICT: ROMFORD
DEATH in the Sub-district of HOME in the County of Essex

No.	Where and when died	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of death	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of register
137	At home of Harriet Zyrogorski, 125, 1/2, Broad St. Romford	Vanda Zytogorski (nee Hanstein)	Female	35	Housewife	Apoplexy	By Harriet Zyrogorski, 125, 1/2, Broad St. Romford	1881	James Hanstein

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DVD 071043

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The death certificate of one of Zytogorski's daughters by his first wife, Vanda.
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Alfred Zytogorski worked for many years under that name as a letter-carrier for the post office. Shortly after Adolphus's death in 1882, he must have been desperate for money and took a silly risk. He was convicted at the [Old Bailey](#) of stealing letters (presumably containing cash or other valuables) and was sentenced to eighteen months hard labour. There is a report of the magistrates court hearing in the *Era*. The full trial report can be found online.

Chess Career

There are various sources for Zytogorski's chess career including the earliest volumes of the *Chess Player's Chronicle*, when Staunton was editing it, and afterwards. Robert Barnett Brien edited the *Chronicle* from August 1854, through 1855 and until the magazine failed during 1856. Zytogorski was then involved to some considerable extent in the Third Series that began in 1859; he may even have been principal editor for a time and his name sometimes appeared on the cover.

In 1841 Zytogorski supplied Staunton with some analysis of the endgame rook and bishop against rook, which appeared in the *Chronicle*: "This gentleman, after pursuing the investigation with a diligence and devotedness unparalleled, has in the handsomest manner, without solicitation, presented to the conductors of this magazine the fruits of his labours."

Some games with Staunton appear in the *Chronicle* in 1841/42 including a loss shown below. From his early career, there are also two of his losses to Elijah Williams in *A Souvenir of the Bristol Chess Club*. He plays weakly in those games but one would not expect to find in a book of this type any games

Zytogorski may have won against Bristolians. Nor was Staunton fond of publishing his own losses. The biggest issue concerns whether Staunton really did lose a match at odds against Zytogorski in 1843 and that will be dealt with in next month's article.

There is not much sign of Zytogorski playing chess after 1843 until 1851 when the tournaments in London and arrival of overseas visitors undoubtedly stimulated new interest in the game. Dutch master and chess historian Fred van der Vliet told me that in 1844 Zytogorski paid a visit to Bulgaria. On his return, Zytogorski wrote to Thomas Wilson Barnes about two variant forms of the game, Abagoren Chess and Bolyar Chess, that he had come across while there. The reference for this information is *Variant Chess*, LV (September 2007) page fifty-five.

Whether he took up the game again in 1851 or whether his activities were just not reported because Staunton controlled most of the media is not clear. If Zytogorski was playing, one would at least expect Walker to mention him in *Bell's Life in London*. Games by him from 1851 are certainly known, including the win in a casual game against Anderssen to which Wayte referred.

Adolphus Zytogorski – Adolf Anderssen

London 1851

Evans Gambit [C52]

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5 4 b4 Bxb4 5 c3 Ba5 6 d4 exd4 7 0-0 dxc3 8 Qb3 Qf6 9 Bg5?! Qg6 10 Nxc3 Bxc3 11 Qxc3 Nge7 12 Bxe7 Nxe7 13 Ne5 Qf6 14 Bxf7+ Kd8 15 Rac1 Nc6 16 f4 Rf8 17 Bd5 a5 18 Nxc6+ bxc6



[FEN "r1bk1r2/2pp2pp/2p2q2/p2B4/4PP2/2Q5/P5PP/2R2RK1 w - - 0 19"]

19 e5 Qe7 20 Bxc6 Ra7 21 Rcd1 Qb4 22 Qd4 Ke7 23 Qxa7 1-0

Zytogorski appears to have played much stronger in the 1850s than previously. In 1854 he won a match 6-4 against Fredericus Godfrey Janssens, who was a Belgian teacher resident in London. I found the final game of their match annotated by Löwenthal in his column in the *Era*. I have abbreviated the notes somewhat.

Adolphus Zytogorski – F. G. Janssens

Tenth match game, London 1854

Sicilian Defence or English Opening? [B20]

From *The Era*, 15 October 1854: "The following skilful and scientific game has terminated the match between Messrs. Zytogorski and Janssens [*sic*], in favour of the former."

1 e4 c5 2 c4

An unusual move.

2...e6 3 Nc3 Nc6 4 f4 Nge7 5 g3 Nd4 6 Nge2!?



[FEN "r1bqkb1r/pp1pnppp/4p3/2p5/2PnPP2/2N3P1/PP1PN2P/R1BQKB1R b KQkq - 0 6"]

6...Nec6

It is obvious that checking with the Kt would have lost Black much time.

7 Nxd4 Nxd4 8 Bg2 Be7 9 d3 d6 10 Be3 Bf6 11 0-0 0-0 12 Rb1 Rb8 13 Ne2 Nxe2+ 14 Qxe2 b6 15 b4 Bb7 16 b5 Kh8 17 Rbd1 Qc7 18 g4 g6 19 h4 Rg8

Not 19...Bxh4? 20 g5 winning the bishop.

20 g5 Bg7 21 h5



[FEN "1r4rk/pbq2pbp/1p1pp1p1/1Pp3PP/2P1PP2/3PB3/P3Q1B1/3R1RK1 b - - 0 21"]

21...h6!

The correct move. Had he taken 21...gxh5 then h5 would have secured the game for White.

22 Rf3 d5 23 hxc6 fxc6

If 23...dxe4, Löwenthal gave the variation 24 Rh3 fxc6 25 dxe4 Bf8 (25...h5? 26 Rxh5+) 26 Qb2+ Kh7 27 Bf3 h5 28 Bxh5 gxh5 29 Rxh5+ Kg6 30 Rh6+ Kf7 31 Qf6+ Ke8 32 Qxe6+ Qe7 33 Qxg8 winning easily.

24 gxh6 Bf6 25 Rg3 g5 26 h7

We believe that White might have safely taken 26 Rxc5!?

26...Rg7 27 e5 gxf4 28 Rxc7 Bxc7 29 Bxf4 Rf8 30 Qe3 d4 31 Qg3 Rf5 32 Bh3 Rh5



[FEN "7k/pbq3bP/1p2p3/1Pp1P2r/2Pp1B2/3P2QB/P7/3R2K1 w - - 0 33"]

33 Rf1

White did not fall into the snare of Black's last move, by 33 Bxe6??

33...Qe7 34 Qg4 Qe8 35 Qxe6 Qxe6 36 Bxe6 Kxh7 37 Bg4

Finely conceived.

37...Rh4 38 Bf5+ Kg8 39 Be6+ Kh7 40 Bd5

All these moves are admirably played by White.

40...Rg4+!



[FEN "8/pb4bk/1p6/1PpBP3/2Pp1Br1/3P4/P7/5RK1 w - - 0 41"]

Very ingenious; if 41 Kh2 Bxd5 (If Black takes the other bishop with his rook, the game will be drawn.) 42 cxd5 Rxf4 43 Rxf4 Bxe5 44 Kg3 c4 and wins.

41 Kh1! Bc8 42 e6 Bf8 43 Be5 Bh6 44 Rf7+ Kg6 45 Rc7 1-0

Zytogorski was evidently friendly with the German musician Joseph Kling who ran a public coffee house and private chess rooms upstairs in the same building, at 454 New Oxford Street, in 1855, the private rooms transmuting into the McDonnell Chess Club. Most of the games played in a tournament there, in late April and May 1855, can be found in databases as they were reported by Brien in the *Chronicle*. Further information about the goings-on at Kling's can be found in the chess column of the monthly *Sharpe's London magazine of entertainment and instruction*. Zytogorski was very active as a player in 1855 but then seems to have withdrawn for a time.

Next month: the later playing career, the Staunton controversy, and many more games.

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