

# **Chess History and Reminiscences**

H. E. Bird

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# Chess History and Reminiscences

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This etext was produced by Stephen D. Leary

To  
My Highly Esteemed  
Chess Opponent And Patron  
Of Nearly 40 Years  
W. J. EVELYN, Esq.,  
Of Wotton, Surrey

## PREFACE

This little work is but a condensation and essence of a much larger one, containing the result of what can be discovered concerning the origin and history of chess, combined with some of my own reminiscences of 46 years past both of chess play and its exponents, dating back to the year 1846, the 18th of Simpson's, 9 years after the death of A. McDonnell, and 6 after that of L. de La Bourdonnais when chivalrous and first class chess had come into the highest estimation, and emulatory matches and tests of supremacy in chess skill were the order of the day.

English chess was then in the ascendant, three years before Howard Staunton had vanquished St. Amant of France, and was the recognized world's chess champion, while H. T. Buckle the renowned author of the History of Civilization was the foremost in skill among chess amateurs, Mr. W. Lewis and Mr. George Walker the well known and prolific writers on chess, were among the ten or twelve strongest players, but were seldom seen in the public circle, Mr. Slous and Mr. Perigal were other first rate amateurs of about equal strength. Mr. Daniels who attended Simpson's had just departed. Captain Evans and Captain Kennedy were familiar figures, and most popular alike distinguished and esteemed for amiability and good nature, and were the best friends and encouragers of the younger aspirants.

At this time Simpson's was the principal public arena for first class chess practice and development: the St. George's Chess Club was domiciled in Cavendish Square at back of the Polytechnic. The London Chess Club (the oldest) met at the George and Vulture on Cornhill, when Morphy came in 1858, and Steinitz in 1862, these time honoured clubs were located at King St., St. James, and at Purssell's, Cornhill respectively.

Other clubs for the practice and cultivation of the game were about thirteen in number, representing not five

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percent of those now existing; the oldest seem to have been Manchester, Edinburgh, and Dublin, closely followed by Bristol, Liverpool, Wakefield, Leeds and Newcastle.

Annual County Meetings commenced with that held at Leeds in 1841. The earliest perfectly open Tournaments were two on a small scale at Simpson's in 1848 and 1849, and the first World's International in the Exhibition year 1851, at the St. George's Chess Club, Polytechnic Building, Cavendish Square. In each of these Tournaments the writer participated.

Three chess columns existed when I first visited Simpson's in 1846, viz., Bells Life managed by Mr. George Walker from 1834 to 1873. The Illustrated London News from 15th February 1845 to 1878, in charge of Howard Staunton, and the Pictorial Times which lasted from February 1845 to June 1848. The first column started had appeared in the Lancet 1823, but it continued not quite one year.

The Chess Player's Chronicle issued in 1841 (Staunton), was then the only regular magazine devoted to chess, but a fly leaf had been published weekly about the year 1840, in rather a curious form of which the following is found noted:

About the year 1840 the Garrick Chess Divan was opened by Mr. Huttman at No. 4 Little Russell St., Covent Garden. One of the attractions of this little saloon was the publication every week of a leaf containing a good chess problem, below it all the gossip of the chess world in small type. The leaf was at first sold for sixpence, including two of the finest Havannah Cigars, or a fine Havannah and a delicious cup of coffee, but was afterwards reduced to a penny without the cigars. The problem leaf succeeding well, a leaf containing games was next produced, and finally the two were merged in a publication of four pages entitled the Palamede.

The Gentleman's Magazine 1824, 1828, British Miscellany 1839, Bath and Cheltenham Gazette 1840, and Saturday Magazine 1840, 1845, had contained contributions in chess, but of regular columns there were only the three before mentioned, now there are about one hundred and fifty, mostly of larger dimensions.

Mr. George Walker's 1000 games published in 1844, gives no game of earlier date than 1780, viz., one of Philidor's of whose skill he gives 62 specimens, and there are 57 games by correspondence played between 1824 and 1844.

The list of chess works of consideration up to Philidor's time, number about thirty, but there were several editions of Jacobus de Cessolus (1275 to 1290) including translations by J. Ferron and Jean De Vigny, from which last named Caxton's book of 1474 was derived.

Lucena, Vicenz, Damiano, and Jacob Mennell appeared before 1520, Ruy Lopez in 1561, Polerio, Gianuzio, Greco, Salvio, Carrera, Gustavus Selenus and the translation of Greco, followed in the interval from 1561 to 1656.

I. Bertin 1735 and the six Italian works of the last century, were the principal which followed with Philidor's manifold editions, up to Sarratt the earliest of the nineteenth century writers.

Dr. A. Van der Linde, Berlin 1874, 1118 pages, 4098 names in Index, and 540 diagrams includes notice of Cotton's complete gamester 1664, and Seymour's complete gamester 1720, with editions of Hoyle's games from 1740 to 1871, in fact about one-fourth of Linde's book is devoted to the specification of books and magazines, mostly of the nineteenth century, even down to the A.B.C. of Chess, by a lady.

Poems have been written on chess, of which the most esteemed have been Aben Ezra 1175, (translated by Dr. Hyde) Conrad Von Ammenhusen and Lydgate's "Love Battle" in the fourteenth century Vida, Bishop of Alba 1525, Sir William Jones 1761, and Frithiofs Saga by Esaias Tegner 1825.

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Of articles which have appeared during the last fifteen years, the Retrospects of Chess in the Times particularly that of the 25th June 1883, (the first on record) mark events of lasting interest in the practice of the game, which would well merit reproduction. Professor Ruskin's modest but instructive letters (28 in number 1884 to 1892), also contain much of value concerning chess nomenclature, annotation, ethics and policy combined with some estimable advice and suggestions for promoting greater harmony in the chess world.

The able article in Bailey's 1885, on chess competitions and the progress of the game, and that in the Fortnightly Review of December 1886, entitled "The Chess Masters of the Day," rank as the other most noteworthy productions of the last seven years' period in chess.

I regret that it is not in my power to produce the more extended work, for to bring that now submitted within assigned compass and cost, I have had to omit much that would be needful to render such a work complete, and to give but a Bird's eye view of chapters which would well merit undiminished space. Thus the complete scores and analyses of the matches, tournaments and great personal tests of skill and statistics of the game would be acceptable to a few, whilst the full accounts of individual players such as Philidor, Staunton, Anderssen, Morphy, Lowenthal, Steinitz, Zukertort, Blackburne and perhaps even Bird, (Bailey's and Ruskin's opinions) would be regarded and read with interest by many chess players.

Respecting the supposed first source of chess the traditional and conjectural theories which have grown up throughout so many ages, regarding the origin of chess, have not become abandoned even in our own days, and we generally hear of one or other of them at the conclusion of a great tournament. It has been no uncommon thing during the past few years to find Xerxes, Palamedes, and even Moses and certain Kings of Babylon credited with the invention of chess.

The conclusions arrived at by the most able and trustworthy authorities however, are, that chess originated in India, was utterly unknown to the Greeks and Romans, and was first introduced into Europe from Persia shortly after the sixth century of our era. In its earliest Asiatic form styled the Chaturanga, It was adapted for four persons, having four small armies of eight each. King, three pieces answering to our Rook, Bishop, and Knight, Elephant (Chariot or Ship,) and Horse, with four Pawns. The players decided what piece to move by the throw of an oblong die.

About 1,350 years ago the game under the name Chatrang, adapted for two persons with sixteen piece on each side, and the same square board of 64 squares, became regularly practiced, but when the dice became dispensed with is quite unknown.

It may not be possible to trace the game of chess with absolute certainty, back to its precise source amidst the dark periods of antiquity, but it is easy to shew that the claim of the Hindus as the inventors, is supported by better evidence both inferential and positive than that of any other people, and unless we are to assume the Sanskrit accounts of it to be unreliable or spurious, or the translations of Dr. Hyde, Sir William Jones and Professor Duncan Forbes to be disingenuous and untrustworthy concoctions (as Linde the German writer seems to insinuate) we are justified in dismissing from our minds all reasonable doubts as to the validity of the claims of the Hindu Chaturanga as the foundation of the Persian, Arabian, Medieval and Modern Chess, which it so essentially resembled in its main principles, in fact the ancient Hindu Chaturanga is the oldest game not only of chess but of anything ever shown to be at all like it, and we have the frank admissions of the Persians as well as the Chinese that they both received the game from India.

The Saracens put the origin of chess at 226, says the "Westminster Papers," (although the Indians claim we think with justice to have invented it about 108 B.C. Artaxerxes a Persian King is said to have been the inventor of a game which the Germans call Bret-spiel and chess was invented as a rival game.

## Chess History and Reminiscences

The connecting links of chess evidence and confirmation when gathered together and placed in order form, combined so harmonious a chain, that the progress of chess from Persia to Arabia and into Spain has been considered as quite satisfactorily proved and established by authorities deemed trustworthy, both native and foreign, and are quite consistent with a fair summary up of the more recent views expressed by the German writers themselves, and with the reasonable conclusions to be deduced even from the very voluminous but not always best selected evidence of Van der Linde.

So much has a very lively interest in chess depended in modern times upon the enthusiasm of individuals, that the loss of a single prominent supporter or player, has always seemed to sensibly affect it. This was notably felt on the death of Sir Abram Janssens and Philidor towards the end of the last century, and of Count Bruhl, Mr. G. Atwood and General Conway in this. During the last 15 years the loss of Staunton, Buckle, Cap. Kennedy, Barnes, Cochrane and Boden, and yet more recently of such friends of British chess as F. H. Lewis, I. C. H. Taylor and Captain Mackenzie left a void, which in the absence of any fresh like popular players and supporters, goes far to account for the depression and degeneracy of first class chess in England.

Though the game is advancing more in estimation than ever, and each succeeding year furnishes conclusive evidence of its increasing progress, in twenty years more under present auspices, a British Chess Master will be a thing of the past, and the sceptre of McDonnell and of Staunton will have crumpled into dust, at the very time when in the natural course of things according to present indications, the practice of the game shall have reached the highest point in its development.

We miss our patrons and supporters of the past who were ever ready to encourage rising enterprize. None have arisen to supply their places. The distinguished and noble names we find in the programmes of our Congresses and Meetings, and in the 1884 British Chess Association are there as form only, and it seems surprising that so many well known and highly esteemed public men should allow their names to continue to be published year after year as Patrons, Presidents, or Vice-Presidents of concerns in which apparently they take not; or at least evince not, the slightest interest.

Of the score or so of English born Chess Masters on the British Chess Association lists of 1862, but five remain, two alone of whom are now residing in this country.

The British Chess Association of 1884, which constituted itself the power to watch over the interests of national chess, has long since ceased to have any real or useful existence, and why the name is still kept up is not easy to be explained.

It has practically lapsed since the year 1889, when last any efforts were made to collect in annual or promised subscriptions, or to carry out its originally avowed objects, and the keeping up in print annually, of the names of the President and Vice-President Lord Tennyson, Prof. Ruskin, Lord Randolph Churchill, and Sir Robert Peel seems highly objectionable.

The exponents of chess for the 19th century certainly merit more notice than my space admits of. After Philidor who died in 1795, and his immediate successors Verdoni and E. Sarratt, W. Lewis, G. Walker, John Cochrane, Deschappelles and de La Bourdonnais, have always been regarded as the most able and interesting, and consequently the most notable of those for the quarter of a century up to 1820, and the above with the genial A. McDonnell of Belfast, who came to the front in 1828, and excelled all his countrymen in Great Britain ever known before him, constitute the principal players who flourished up to 1834, when the series of splendid contests between La Bourdonnais and McDonnell cast all other previous and contemporary play into the shade.

The next period of seventeen years to 1851, had produced Harrwitz, Horwitz and Lowenthal from abroad, and Buckle, Cap. Kennedy, Bird and Boden at home, whilst the great International Chess Tournament of that

year witnessed the triumph of the great Anderssen, and introduced us to Szen and Kiezeritzky, then followed a lull in first class chess amongst us from 1851 to 7, succeeded by a year of surpassing interest, for 1858 welcomed the invincible Paul Morphy of New Orleans, considered by some superior even to La Bourdonnais, Staunton and Anderssen the three greatest players who had preceded him.

In the year 1862 England's second great gathering took place and Anderssen was again victorious. In the four years after Morphy's short but brilliant campaign, a wonderful array of distinguished players had come forward, comprising Mackenzie, Paulsen, Steinitz, Burn and Blackburne, The Rev. G. A. MacDonnell, C. De Vere, Barnes, Wormald, Brien and Campbell. In another ten years two more of the most illustrious chess players appeared in the persons of Zukertort and Gunsberg, and we read of matches between Steinitz, Zukertort and Blackburne, for a modest ten pound note (see growth of stakes in chess).

In 1867 at Paris, 1870 at Baden, 1873 at Vienna, and 1878 again at Paris, four more International Chess Tournaments of nearly equal interest to the 1851 and 1862 of London took place, and they were won respectively by Kolisch, Anderssen, (third time) Steinitz and Zukertort, Berlin 1881, a very fine victory for Blackburne, 1882 Vienna, honours divided by Steinitz and Winawer, and 1883 the Criterion, London, a second remarkable victory for Zukertort represent the other most noteworthy tournaments.

Of all sorts International and National, there have been 34 meetings with 46 County local gatherings, as well as 20 of the University matches between Oxford and Cambridge, of which the two first and greatest were held at Perrott's, Milk St., in 1873 and 1874.

Continuing with the chess giants of more modern date, Mason's great powers became developed in 1876, and Tchigorin of St. Petersburg, a splendid player came to the front in 1881. Equal to him in force, perhaps, if not in style, and yet more remarkable in their records of success are the present champions Dr. Tarrasch of Nuremberg and E. Lasker of Berlin. The Havana people, who, for five or six years past have spent more money on great personal chess encounters than all the rest of the world combined, have put forth Walbrodt of Leipzig. In the above mentioned four players, chess interest for a time will mostly centre, with Steinitz, yet unvanquished, and, as many consider, able to beat them all, the future must be of unique interest, and the year 1893 may decide which of five favourite foreign players will be entitled to rank as the world's champion of chess, so far as can be decided by matches played on existing conditions.

Chess with clocks and the tedious slow time limit of fifteen moves an hour (say a working day for a single game) must not be confounded with genuine, useful and enjoyable chess without distracting time encumbrances as formerly played. Played at the pace and on the conditions which the exigencies of daily, yea hourly, life and labour admit of experience shews that there are yet English exponents that can render a good account of any of the foreign players.

First class chess enthusiasm and support for the past year has been limited to Newcastle-on-Tyne and Belfast. The unbounded and impartial liberality of these very important cities has met with gratifying reward in the increased appreciation of their efforts and the enhanced number of club members and interest in the general circle. These highly successful meetings, however, have caused no impetus in metropolitan management, and has seemed to divert the attention of chess editors and the responsible powers entirely from the fact that the London 1892 First Class International Chess Tournament promised has been altogether neglected, if not forgotten. We are thus in grave default with the German and Dutch Chess Associations, who have so faithfully and punctually fulfilled every engagement.

The forthcoming monster chess competition at Birmingham, from which first class players are excluded can scarcely be deemed a fitting substitute for our owing International engagement with any true lover of chess and its friendly reciprocity, and least of all in the eyes of our foreign chess brethren and entertainers.

NOTE. This monster Chess Contest between the North and the South of England, represented by 106 competitors on each side, which terminated in a victory for the South by 53 1/2 to 52 1/2, took place at Birmingham on Saturday, the 28th January last, and has occasioned considerable interest among the votaries of the game and reports pronounce it a great success.

As affording indications of general chess progress, since the game became a recognized item of public recreatory intelligence, and the time of the pioneer International Chess Tournament of all nations, London 1851, the event may be deemed of some import and significance, as evidence of the vastly increased popularity of the game, but the play seems not to have been productive of many very high specimens of the art of chess, and has not been conspicuous for enterprise or originality, and if these exhibitions are to take the place of the kind of International Tournaments hitherto held, much improvement must be manifested, before they can be deemed worthy substitutes, even from a national point of view only.

Books on the openings in chess have continued fairly popular, but it is singular how very little novelty or originality has been imparted into them. Since Staunton and Wormald's works, and the German hand-books, the Modern Chess Instructor of Mr. Steinitz, 1889, was looked forward to with the greatest interest, and the second of the several volumes of which it was to consist, promised for September, 1890, is still awaited with anxious expectation. In regard to the practice of the game, the lack of national chess spirit, or organization, and the extraordinary denominating influence of the foreign element, is the remarkable and conspicuous characteristic, and the modest seat assigned to British Masters in the Retrospects of 1889 and 1890 (Times), will it is feared have to be placed yet further back.

### **The Chess Openings: Considered Critically And Practically**

By H. E. BIRD.

"This is the work of one of the most distinguished of English players. Since the death of Mr. Staunton nobody can more fairly claim to represent the national school of players than Mr. H. E. BIRD, who took part in the first International Tournament of 1851, and also played at Vienna in 1873, at Philadelphia, and recently at Paris. Perhaps his most brilliant performances have been in single matches, in two of which he made an equal score with Falkbeer, while, in 1867, when contending against Steinitz (fresh from his victory over Anderssen), he won six games against his opponent's seven, while seven others were drawn. Six years later Mr. BIRD once more proved his right to be considered second to none among English players, by defeating Mr. Wisker, the holder of the British Association Challenge Cup, after a protracted struggle. So far, therefore, as practical proficiency constitutes a claim to respect as a teacher of chess—theory, the author of 'The Chess Openings' is in no need of an excuse for coming forward as an instructor. Mr. BIRD by no means confines himself to mere reproduction. He has the merit of having identified his name with several original variations, and of having revived several older defences, such as the Cunningham Gambit, with no small degree of success. The book has been evidently the result of painstaking and accurate analysis, and it may be confidently recommended to the more advanced players who have graduated in the beaten tracks of the 'Handbuch,' and are willing to follow in the steps of an able and original guide. In addition to the usual Appendix of problems, Mr. BIRD supplies a very useful and attractive feature in a series of end game positions from the most celebrated modern match-games. Owing to clear type and large diagrams, the volume will prove an agreeable companion when a board is out of reach."—Athenaeum, September 7th, 1880.

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Chess Masterpieces: Comprising—A Collection of 156 Choice Games of the past quarter of a century, with notes, including the finest Games in the Exhibition of 1851, and in the Vienna Tournament of 1873, with excellent specimens of the styles of Anderssen, Blackburne, Der Laza, Hanstein, Kolisch, Lowenthal,



## Chess History and Reminiscences

Morphy, Staunton, Steinitz, and the principal English Players. Supplemented by Games of La Bourdonnais, McDonnell and Cochrane, contested prior to 1849, Compiled by H. E. BIRD. Cloth, black lettered, 3/6; or, handsomely bound, gilt and gilt edges 4/-.

The entire series will be found full of interest and points of excellence, and can scarcely fail to afford amusement and pleasure, as well as to impart instruction, to all who may avail themselves of the opportunity of examining them, they will be of especial service to amateurs who aspire to preeminence in chess.

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Times, Biographical Notices, Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic, Pictorial World, American and Continental, Newcastle Chronicle, and Hereford Times.

Professor Ruskin (from 28 letters in all, since 1884). "Your games always delight me, as they seem in my humble judgment specimens of chess skill remarkable for originality and vivacity."—12th June, 1884.

"Indeed I feel that you have done more for chess at home and abroad than any other living player."—16th April, 1885.

"Your Catalogue is quite admirably drawn up, and if ever I can recover some peace of life and mind I hope to be of some use in furthering the sale of the book and recommending its views."—7th June, 1887.

H.R.H. PRINCE LEOPOLD, EARL DARTREY, SIR C. RUSSELL, LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL, Etc., Etc., (also great Musicians, Amateur Chess Players, letters and support.)

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### STEINITZ

As a player, analyst, critic and author. Considerations of his book on the openings. Notes on his general play, and conduct of the game, are dealt with in review of Modern Chess Instructor.

Steinitz claims with justice to be very conscientious in the performance of his work at all times, and he had no need to excuse himself for the following criticism, which occupied him (he told me) months in its preparation. It seems to me that an author has reason to be obliged to any who may point out his real errors and shortcomings. Steinitz, however, was betrayed into a degree of unfairness and prejudice in dealing with Staunton and Wormald's books, and Morphy's play, bordering almost on imbecility. That the great artist himself is not infallible appears from my review of his Modern Chess Instructor.

### STEINITZ'S REVIEW

The Field, December, 1879.

CHESS OPENINGS, 1879.

The Chess Opening, Considered Critically and Practically. By H. E. Bird. London: Dean Son, 160, Fleet Street.

The public record of chess matches and great tournaments places the name of the author of this work above that of any living English competitor for chess honours, excepting Mr. Blackburne. It is therefore all the more disappointing to find that Mr. Bird's book has not done justice to his great reputation as a player. The author's

chief defect as an analyst arises probably from one of his distinguishing qualities as a practitioner over the board. Few chess masters could excel Mr. Bird in rapid survey of position and in the formation and execution of surprising maneuvers, which, though not always sound—and sometimes, as he admits, even eccentric—tend to raise confusing complications, difficult for the adversary to disentangle at a quick rate. These qualities make Mr. Bird one of the most dangerous opponents in "skittle play," or in matches regulated by a fast time limit; but they prove almost antagonistic to the acquirement of excellency as an author on the game. For the first-class analyst is not merely expected to record results, but to judge the causes of success or failure from the strictly scientific point of view, and he has often to supplement with patient research the shortcomings of great masters in actual play. In such cases every move of a main variation becomes a problem which has to be studied for a great length of time; and the best authors have watched the progress of different openings in matches and tournaments for years, and pronounced their judgment only after the most careful comparisons, Mr. Bird is, however, too much of an advocate to be a good judge, and he evinces great partiality for ingenious traps and seductive combinations, which form an attractive feature of his own style in actual play, but which mostly occur only in light skirmishes. Moreover he often treats his duties as an analyst in a cavalier fashion. In his quotations from other authors he embodies variations which stand already severely condemned by first-class chess critics in various chess periodicals; and his original researches contain a considerable portion of "skittle" analysis, which does not bear cursory examination.

We have no room for lengthened demonstrations, and must confine ourselves to a few instances of the latter description, all occurring in the compiler's new additions. On page 6, he overlooks the winning of a clear piece which White can effect by Q to R4, followed by P to QR3 if the B be defended. On page 22 Black can win a piece on the 16th move by P to KB4, followed by P to KKt3, and there is no chance of any counter-attack by P to KKt4, for Black may afterwards interpose the B at K4, and get the K into the corner. On page 105 a piece can be won by Black on the 10th move by B to Q5, for the Kt has no retreat, a mate being threatened at KB3. The ending of a game between Messrs. Bird and MacDonnell affords a still more remarkable illustration. There is abundant proof that the author must have examined the position at least more than once, for, by a singular error, the identical ending appears twice in the book—on pages 183 and 197,—each time with a large diagram. On each occasion a win is demonstrated for White in nine moves, while at least a piece can be gained at once by Q to K7, followed accordingly by P to Q6 dis. ch., or B to KKt5. Mr. Bird would be annoyed to make such oversights over the board; and there is no excuse for such shallow examples being recommended to the student without the least comment on their weak points.

As regards the general arrangement, we have to remark that the variations sometimes seem to have been examined loosely and separately, irrespective of their relation to each other, or to the main propositions of the author in reference to the form of opening he deals with; and the brevity or length of space assigned to different forms of play have apparently been decided in a whimsical and arbitrary manner. For instance, on page 29, in the Philidor's defence, 7. Kt to KB3, is described to afford the most satisfactory and secure opening for Black. On the next page the move is repeated under the separate heading, Example II, and it looks odd enough that one single move should have received such prominence, the only addition being, "Won by Harrwitz in 40 moves," as if it were to be forced by Black in that number, while at the time the positions show little difference. But, stranger still, four pages later on (page 34) the identical variation reappears, taken from the same game between Morphy and Harrwitz (though this is not stated), with three more moves on each side added to it, but this time the remark is made, that "White has a good position." To take another example. On page 78 there is a repetition of 10 moves on each side, merely for the purpose of indicating a different 11th move for White. It is scarcely necessary to point out that in each case the stronger move should have been inserted in the main variation, while the weaker one could have been disposed of in a foot-note of one line.

While on this subject we cannot refrain from mentioning the frequent references to "Chess Masterpieces," a work previously published by the author, which contained a collection of fine games partly reproduced from Howard Taylor's "Chess Brilliants," and other publications, with additions mostly from Mr. Bird's own

practice. We must confess that some of the so-called variations extracted from the "Masterpieces," appear to be nothing more than advertisements. Notably, on page 157, four "examples" are given, which do not go beyond the 4th move, and leave no mark on the positions, and then we are gravely informed, in a manner already described, that White or Black won in so-and-so many moves.

We notice with great pleasure the handsome and courteous manner in which almost all the prominent chess masters of the day are mentioned in the book, and the sense of fairness evinced by Mr. Bird in the selection of variations and examples from his own practice, irrespective of his victory or defeat. But his chess historical references are unreliable, and he often wrongly ascribes the adoption of certain variations to different players in a manner which could have been easily rectified by taking a little more trouble. This is not unimportant, for the reputed strength of a player is evidence of the strength of an opening he favours in matches and tournaments. We can only adduce a few instances which are more within the writer's personal knowledge.

The statement about 5. Q to K2, in the Buy Lopez, on page 16, is much confused. The move was adopted by Mr. Blackburne in the final tie match of the Vienna tournament, but it never occurred in the first game of the Steinitz-Blackburne match, as Mr. Bird can convince himself from his own book, where the latter game is published in full on page 171. Steinitz is also erroneously credited with strongly favouring the attack in the Scotch Gambit, for we do not remember a single game on record in which he ever adopted that form of opening as first player. On the other hand, a variation in the Evans Gambit is ascribed to Zukertort, which actually occurred first in a game between Steinitz and Blackburne, played in the London Grand Tournament of 1872. This error seems to have been quoted from Staunton and Wormald's "Chess Theory and Practice."

A few more words about the problems at the end of the book and we have done with the details. There are about a dozen compositions mostly by high-class American authors, and some of them of very good quality; but, unfortunately, Mr. Bird has omitted to indicate their solutions. We must suppose this to be due to an oversight, as he gives the key moves of the four problems by English composers. The omission is deplorable, for many students would wish to appreciate the author's idea, and the merits of the construction, if they fail to solve the problem. To quote an instance from our own experience; we could not find any solution to the problem on page 224, which composition, we conclude, is either of the highest order or suffers from the gravest of all faults, that of being impossible. In either case we should have liked to examine the solution.

Our judgment of the book, on the whole, is that it cannot be ranked in the first class with the works of Heydebrand, Zukertort, Staunton, Lowenthal, Neuman and Suhle, Lange, but it will satisfy the demands of the great number of lovers of the game who do not aspire above the second rank. Mr. Bird's ability and ingenuity is beyond doubt, and there is ample evidence of his qualifications in the book before us, but he has not yet acquired that element of genius which has been defined as the capacity for taking pains. Mr. Bird could produce a much better book than this, and we hope he will.

### **Variously estimated from 3,000 to 1,000 B.C. CHATURANGA.**

The Primeval Hindu Chess.

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bnrk--pb
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[Diagram of a Chaturanga board with 4 armies. Yellow is in upper left. Black is in upper right. Green is in

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lower left. Red is in lower right.]

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The Medieval and Modern Chess.  
White  
RNBKQBNR  
PPPPPPPP  
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PPPPPPPP  
rnbkqbnr  
Black
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[Diagram of a standard chessboard, white pieces at the top, black pieces at the bottom.]

Derived from the Persian Chatrang, 537–540 A.D.

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833-842.  
Problem I. by the Caliph MU'TASIM BILLAH.  
Black  
-k-----  
RnR-----  
bN-p--r-  
p-nQpB--  
p--N-b-r  
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-P--P---  
-qBK----  
White  
White to move, and give checkmate at the ninth move.
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About 1380.  
Problem II. by 'ALI SHATRANJ.  
Black  
---r---r  
ppq---R-  
b--bkp-p  
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--PP----  
PP-B-Q--  
--K---PP  
--B-----  
White  
White to play and mate in eight moves.
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### CHESS HISTORY AND REMINISCENCES

#### CONCERNING THE ORIGIN OF CHESS

A not unfair criterion is afforded of the long prevailing and continued misconception as to the origin of chess, by the lack of knowledge regarding early records as to its history exhibited in the literature of last century,

Variously estimated from 3,000 to 1,000 B.C. CHATURANGA.

and the press and magazine articles of this even to the present year. We refer not to lines of poets such as Pope, Dryden and others, with whom the ancient order of fiction is permissible, or to writers of previous periods, from Aben Ezra to Ruy Lopez, Chaucer and Lydgate, or Caxton and Barbiere, but to presumably studied and special articles, such as those given in Dictionaries of Arts and Sciences and in Encyclopaedias. The great work of 1727 dedicated to the King— which claimed to embody a reasonable and fair account—and even the best knowledge on all subjects referred to in it; contains an article on chess of some dimensions, which may well be taken as an example of the average ignorance of the knowledge of information existing at the time. The Chinese, it says, claim to date back their acquaintance with chess to a very remote period; so with the best testimonies of that country, which acknowledge its receipt from India in the sixth century the writer seems to have been quite unacquainted. Nothing occurs in the article as to the transit of chess from India into Persia, next to Arabia and Greece, and by the Saracens into Spain; neither does a line appear as to Egyptian probabilities, or the nature of the game inscribed on edifices in that country. Though abounding in traditional names of Trojan heroes, and others equally mythical as regards chess, the more genuine ones of Chosroes of Persia, Harun, Mamun and Mutasem of Bagdad, Walid of Cordova, the Carolingian Charlemagne of France, Canute the Dane, William of Normandy the English kings are entirely absent, nor is there a word concerning Roman games or the edict which refers to them in which Chess and Draughts (both mentioned) were specially protected and exempted from the interdiction against other games; which has escaped all writers, and would certainly, if known about, have been deemed of some significance. The Persian and Arabian periods from the time of Chosroes, to Harun, covers the Golden Age of Arabian literature, which is more prolific in chess incident than any other; yet even this and Firdausi's celebrated Persian Shahnama, and Anna Comnena's historical work escapes notice. We may perhaps, not implicitly trust or credit, all we read of in some of the Eastern manuscripts biographical sketches; but there is much of reasonable narrative we need not discredit nor reject. We may feel disposed to accept, with some reservation, the account of the 6,000 male and 6,000 female slaves, and 60,000 horses of Al Mutasem, (the eighth of Abbasside). The prodigious bridal expenditure, comprising gifts of Estates, houses, jewels, horses, described in the history of Al Mamun (the seventh of Abbasside, and the most glorious of his race), may seem fabulous to us; the extraordinary memories of certain scholars narrated in biographies, who could recite thousands of verses and whole books by heart may appear worthy of confirmation; the composition of two thousand manuscripts by one writer, and the possession of forty thousand volumes by another, may somewhat tax our credulity. We may feel a little surprised to hear that Chosroes' chess men were worth an amount equivalent to one million of our money in the present day; we may doubt, or disagree with the opinions attributed to Hippocrates, or to Galen; that cures were effected, or even assisted of such complaints as diarrhea and erysipelas by the means of chess; or, that, as the Persian suggests it has been found a remedy of beneficial in many ailments from the heart ache to the tooth ache. We may doubt whether the two Lydian brothers, Lydo and Tyrrhene, in the story of Herodotus really diminished the pangs of hunger much by it; but, amidst all our incredulity, we can believe, and do believe, that Chosroes and chess, Harun and chess, Charlemagne and chess, Al Mamun and chess, Canute and chess, are as well authenticated and worthy of credit, as other more important incidents found in history, notwithstanding that encyclopaediasts and writers down from the days of the Eastern manuscripts, the Persian Shahnama and Anna Comnenas history to the days of Pope and Philidor, and of the initiation of Sanskrit knowledge among the learned, never mention their names in connection with chess as exponents of which the Ravan, king of Lanka of the Hindoo law books, the famous prince Yudhisthira and the sage Vyasa of the Sanskrit, and Nala of the poems, and in more modern accounts, Indian King Porus, Alexander the Great and Aristotle, are far more reasonable names inferentially, if not sufficiently attested, than those cherished by traditionists such as Palamedes, Xerxes, Moses, Hermes, or any of the Kings of Babylon or their philosophers.

NOTE. The ever growing popularity of chess is forcibly and abundantly proved in a variety of ways. One conclusive proof of it is afforded by the enormous and ever increasing sale of Chess Equipages, Boards, Men and Figures, Diagrams, Scoring Books, Sheets, a somewhat matter of fact, it is true, but at the same time practical, reliable, and satisfactory species of evidence. Its progress is further attested by the extreme favour in which Chess Tournaments both International and National, are held, at home and abroad, which attract a

## Chess History and Reminiscences

degree of attention and awaken an interest little dreamt of during any past period of the history of the game; and it is further illustrated by the continued formation of Chess Clubs in every sphere, the ever widening interest in the home circle, and by many other facts which indicate with absolute certainty its highly enhanced appreciation among the thoughtful and intelligent of all classes of the community.

The humble and working classes have, in recent years, began to avail themselves very considerably of the enjoyment of the game, and this is a powerful and laudable ground for gratification, because chess, besides being innocent, intellectual and mentally highly invigorating, though soothing also, is essentially inexpensive and does not tend to the sort of excitement too often occasioned by some other games where the temptation, too often indulged, of spending money principally when losing, in hopes of obtaining supposed stimulating consolation and nerve, is so frequently manifested, that it appears at times to be so irresistible an accompaniment of the game as to become almost a condition and part of the play.

Chess in fact, affords the greatest maximum of enjoyment, with the smallest minimum of expense; it is at the same time the most pleasingly absorbing, yet the most scientific of games; it is also looked upon as the most ancient, and with, perhaps, the exception of Draughts probably is. The reason why it has been for so many ages, and still is called the "Royal Game" is, because it came to Europe from Persia, and took its name from Schach or Shah, which, in that language signifies King, and Matt dead from the Arabic language making combined "Schach Matt" the King is dead, which is the derivation of our "Checkmate."

The degree of intellectual skill which chess admits of, has been considered and pronounced so high, that Leibnitz declared it to be far less a game than a science. Euler, Franklin, Buckle and others have expressed similar views; and the Egyptians, the Persians, and the Arabians according to many writers, including Mr. Warton and the Rev. Mr. Lambe, have also so regarded it.

Chess is so ancient that, by that distinction alone, it seems taken beyond the category of games altogether; and it has been said that it probably would have perished long ago, if it had not been destined to live for ever. It affords so much genuine intrinsic interest that it can be played without pecuniary stake; and has been so played more than all other games put together, and continues to be so during the present time on occasions, by the very finest players. It exists, flourishes, and gains ground continually and prodigiously, although the average annual support in amount for first class chivalrous chess competitions, tournaments and matches in all Great Britain does not equal that put on in former years as the stake of a good prize fight; whilst the receipts of a great football match at Bradford and other important cities, which can be named, exceeds the combined incomes of all the few remaining British chess masters derived from chess instruction and skill in play.

Chess is, moreover, surrounded by a host of associations, and is suggestive of a pleasant mass of memories, anecdotes, manners, and incidents, such as no other game, and hardly any science may presume to boast; and though never yet honoured throughout its long life by any continuous history, or consecutive and connected record, its traditions from time immemorial have been of the most illustrious, royal, and noble character.

More apt at figures, than at diction, I have no claim to powers of writing or learning, which can afford me any hopes of doing full justice to so important a task as a worthy work on the history of chess would be; my labours and experience, however, may have enabled me to gather together materials for a more solid and substantial chess structure, than at present exists and I am not without confidence that competent and skilful workers will be found to construct an edifice more worthy of our day, which present, and pending, grand developments will still further consolidate in interest and glory; a building in fact cemented by the noblest and most worthy, praiseworthy, and commendable associations with which the aspiring and deserving artisan and mechanic of the present and future, may be as closely identified as the greatest rulers, deepest thinkers, and most accomplished and profound scholars, and distinguished men of science of the past; affording also a substantial boon, which may be conferred by philanthropists on their less fortunate brethren in society, as it is

calculated to induce temperate as well as peaceful and thoughtful habits. A bond of social union also to all who appreciate and care to avail themselves of the relief and advantages which chess is so well known to afford, over other less innocent, less intellectual and more expensive and objectionable movements.

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The following notice of chess shortly after the death of Dr. Zukertort, add materially to an increasing appreciation of chess among the working classes, and help the good work on.

"THE WEEKLY DISPATCH," June 24th, 1888.

By the sudden death of Dr. Zukertort, last Wednesday morning, the royal game of chess loses one of its most interesting and brilliant exponents. This distinguished master was only forty-six, and he has been cut off right in the middle of an interesting tournament at the British Chess Club, in which he stood the best chance of winning the first prize. Amongst his last conversations was his arranging to play Blackburne on Saturday, the 23rd, and Bird on Monday, the 25th. The extreme painfulness of Zukertort's death to his friends cannot be estimated by the general public. Famous cricketers and famous actors are applauded by those they entertain or amuse. The chess master receives no applause; over the board, however, he enters into conversation with amateurs, and is rewarded by friendships that far outweigh the wildest ephemeral outbursts of approval. The friendships so formed by Zukertort have now been snapped, and his removal has caused, in the words of the old player Bird, "a severe blank." Bird himself is an interesting character. He is by far the oldest chess master, does the chess correspondence for the Times, and is as well known by his chess books as by his play. The game between him and Zukertort in the tournament now in progress was looked forward to with intense interest, for he and Zukertort were the leading scorers, and the fight for the first prize would have centred in this contest. A good feature in Bird's character is his disposition to make acquaintances with working men. He has taught many of them his "charming game," and has frequently been told afterwards that it has been the means of saving them a few shillings every week. This is easily understood, for a man that plays chess is not likely to play "penny nap" nor to drink much four-ale. Such at any rate, is Mr. Bird's theory; and he is just now endeavouring to promote a scheme for the popularising of chess amongst the industrial classes.

## CHESS NOTES AND REFERENCES

### THEORIES AS TO THE INVENTION OF CHESS

The honour of the invention of chess has been claimed, we are told, by seven countries, China, India, Egypt, Greece, Assyria, Persia and Arabia.

Capt. Kennedy, in one of his chess sketches observes, and Mr. Staunton, in his Chess Player's Chronicle repeats the statement, thus: "That this is as many countries as aforetime there were cities in Greece, each of which, it is said, having peacefully allowed Homer to starve during his life-time, started up after he died in a fierce contention for the glory of having given him birth.

My old friends, Capt. Kennedy and Mr. Staunton, no doubt, used the words "starved" figuratively, for neglected by his country, for myself, I really do not know whether Homer really was neglected by his country or not.

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### TRADITIONS AS TO THE ORIGIN

The traditions of chess are numerous and conflicting, Zakaria Yahya a writer of the tenth century in "The

## Chess History and Reminiscences

Delight of the Intelligent in Description of Chess" referring to stories extant and fables respecting its invention to that time remarks, "It is said to have been played by Aristotle, by Yafet Ibn Nuh (Japhet son of Noah) by Sam ben Nuh (Shem) by Solomon for the loss of his son, and even by Adam when he grieved for Abel.

Aben Ezra, the famous Rabbi, interpreter, and expounder of scripture, and who is said to have excelled in every branch of knowledge, attributed the invention of chess to Moses. His celebrated poem on chess, written about 1130 A.D., has been translated into nearly all languages of the civilized globe, into English by Dr. Thomas Hyde, Oxford, 1694.

The unknown Persian, author of the imperfect M.S. presented by Major Price the eminent Orientalist, to the Asiatic Society, and upon which N. Bland, Esq., mainly bases his admirable treatise on Persian Chess, 1850, says—"Hermes, a Grecian sage, invented chess, and that it was abridged and sent to Persia in the sixth century of our era."

The famous Shahnama, by Firdausi, called the Homer of Persia, and other Eastern manuscripts as well as the M.S. of the Asiatic Society, give less ancient traditions of the adaption of chess relating to the time of Alexander the Great and Indian Kings, Fur, Poris, and Kaid; in one of these the reward of a grain of corn doubled sixty-four times was stipulated for by the philosopher, and the seeming insignificance of the demand astonished and displeased the King, who wished to make a substantial recognition worthy of his own greatness and power, and it occasioned sneers and ridicule on the part of the King's treasurer and accountant at Sassa's supposed lack of wisdom and judgment. However, astonishment and chagrin succeeded before they were half way through their computation, for when the total was arrived at, it was found to exceed all the wealth of the world, and the King knew not which to admire most, the ingenuity of the game itself, or that of the minister's demand.

The earliest European work on chess is supposed to be that of Jacobus de Cessolus, a monk of Picardy, which appeared (it is said) in 1290 (scheilt swischen 1250–1275 Linde 1–10). His favourite names are Evil Merodach, King of Babylon and a philosopher named Xerxes, Massman, 1830, gives Ammelin, Amilin, Amilon and Selenus, Ibl, Xerxes whose Greek name was Philometer to whom 597 B.C. has been assigned.

Palamedes and Diomedes of Trojan celebrity, the Lydians of Herodotus, the Thoth of Plato, the Hermes of the Asiatic Society's philosopher; in fact nearly every one of the Gods who has in turn served as the Great Mythological Divinity has been credited with the discovery of chess.

NOTE. There are few parts of learning so involved in obscurity, as the history of Pagan idolatry. It may, perhaps, be some satisfaction to us to think that the ancients themselves knew even less of the matter than we do; but if so, it furnishes a strong argument for the necessity of being very cautious in drawing our conclusions. We believe it may safely be said, that there is not one among all the fabled deities of antiquity, whom (if the writers of antiquity may be trusted) it is not possible to identify with every other—Saturn, Jupiter, Mercury, Pan, Hercules, Priapus, Bacchus, Bel, Moloch, Chemosh, Taut, Thoth, Osiris, Buddha, Vishnou, Siva, all and each of these may be shown to be one and the same person. And whether we suppose this person to have been the Sun, or to have been Adam, or Seth, or Enoch, or Noah, or Shem, or Ham, or Japhet, the conclusion will be still the same, each of them, it may be shewn was worshipped as the Sun, and all of them, wherever their worship was established, were severally considered as the Great Mythological Divinity.

So far, It would not appear that there is any room for much difference of opinion, at least, not if ancient authorities may be depended on.



Dr. Salvic states on the strength of one of his authorities, and Alexandre apparently quite seriously has repeated the statement that the text in Samuel of Abner and Joab's twelve chosen champions "Let the young men now arise and play before us" may be applicable to chess, but the context of the chapter is opposed to any such conclusion. All the foregoing fabulous accounts may be at least declared "not proven" if not utterly unworthy even of the verdict pronounced in those two words. There are three more modern traditions or accounts, the first of which is referred to Alexander the Great's time 336 to 322 B.C., and the two others to about the time of Chosroes—900 years later. Forbes devotes thirteen pages to them and they are given with less detail by the Rev. R. Lambe in 1764 and N. Bland in 1850.

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### THE THREE INDIAN TRADITIONS

In this, the first Indian tradition referred to the time of Alexander the Great, it is related in the Shahnama that a very powerful King of India named Kaid, satiated with war, and having no enemies without, or rebellious subjects within his kingdom, thus addressed his minister Sassa.

"Day and night my mind is harassed with the thoughts of war and strife; when in the hours of the night sleep overpowers me, I dream of nothing but battlefields and conquests, and in the morning, when I awake, I still think over my imaginary combats and victories. Now you are well aware that I have no longer one single enemy or rebel in my whole dominions with whom to contend. It is utterly repugnant to justice and common sense, to go to war without any cause. If I were to do so God would be displeased with me, and a severe retribution for my evil deeds would soon overtake me, even in this world, for is it not said that a kingdom governed by falsehood and oppression is void of stability, and it will soon pass away. Tell me, then, O Sassa, for great is thy wisdom, what am I to do in order to regain my peace of mind, and obtain relief from my present state of weariness and disgust?"

Sassa hereupon bethought himself of a rare game, the invention of an ancient Grecian sage, by name Hermes, which had recently been introduced into India by Alexander and his soldiers, who used to play it at times of leisure. Sassa procured and modified the game and board from 56 pieces and 112 squares to 32 pieces and 64 squares, and explained it to the king, who practised it with both satisfaction and delight, Sassa's stipulation of a reward of a grain of corn doubled again and again 64 times, which was at first deemed ridiculous, was found to amount to 18,446,744,073,709,551,615 rating the barley corn at two shillings the bushel, the value required from the Indian king by the philosopher was 3,385,966,239,667 pounds and 12s an unexpected and amazing sum.

The second version is of another highly ambitious and successful king of Hind, name Fur, who died and left a young son, inexperienced in war and in danger of losing his possessions. The wise men consulted together, and Sassa, the son of Dahir, brought the chess board and men to the Prince, saying, "Here you have an exact image of war, which is conducted on principles similar to those which regulate this wonderful game. The same caution in attack and coolness in defence which you have to exercise here, you will have to put in practice in the battlefield. The Prince with eagerness availed himself of Sassa's instructions until he made himself fully acquainted with the principles of the game. He then assembled his army and went forth in full confidence to encounter his enemies, whom he defeated at all points. He then returned home in triumph, and ever after he cherished his love for the game of chess to a knowledge of which he considered himself indebted for the preservation of his honour, his kingdom and his life."

The third account relates—"After Belugi, reigned Giumhur who had this royal seat in the City of Sandali, in the province of Cachemir. When he died, his brother, called May, was chosen King, who had two sons, Ghav and Talachand. Upon the death of May, their mother Paritchera, that is, endued with angelic beauty, reigned. These two young Princes being grown to maturity, desire to know from their mother who of them was to be

her successor. The mother concealing her mind, gave them both hopes separately. In the meantime, the brothers quarrel, and raise armies, and the mother endeavored to reconcile them by her good advice, but in vain, for soon after they broke out into open war. After various battles, it fell out that Talachand was slain. Upon this, the mother goes to her surviving son, and complains to him of these things.

"Then the wise men of the kingdom set about to compose the game Shatranji, representing the battle of Ghav and Talachand.

"The sorrowful mother contemplates this game, and by daily playing it, brings into her mind the battle and death of her son Talachand. She could not forbear to torment herself with the remembrance of his death, and every day for a long time, to give herself up to the meditation thereof."—SHAHNAMA.

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>From the early ages of the Christian era back to the times of Homer, Herodotus, Sophocles, Plato, and Aristotle, traditions, concerning the origin of this wonderful game have come down to us of a very various and conflicting character; the Arabian and Persian historians from the commentators on the Koran interdict against lots and images to the days of the Persian Shahnama of Firdausi and the Asiatic Society's famous manuscript, have spoken of the origin and history of chess, Aben Ezra, the famous Rabbi, contemporary of Maimonides, Jacobus de Cessolus the Monk of Picardy, Ruy Lopez the Spanish priest, Damiano the Portuguese Apothecary, Gustavus Selenus (the Duke of Luneburg), Dr. Salvic, Carrera, and the writers of the Italian school, have all contributed to the remarkably delusive and often mythical theories propounded in regard to it. In our own Country we have them from Chaucer, Lydgate, Caxton, Barbiere and the Encyclopaediasts, and Pope writing just before knowledge of the Sanskrit became imparted among the learned, and ere the classical Sir William Jones had began to enlighten us, thought probably he had set the matter at rest by declaring that the invention of chess, (which we had and could enjoy without caring to know from whence it came) and which was an imperishable monument of the wisdom of its unknown founder, involved a problem which never would be solved.

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### PROGRESS OF CHESS

It has been a subject of regret with writers that complete games of chess cannot be found for the earlier ages, and it has been suggested that a few well annotated games of the great Eastern players of one thousand years ago, and of the rival champions of Spain, Italy and Sicily in the Sixteenth century would be of more interest than all the problems and positions handed down to us in existence and, it certainly would be pleasing and instructive to be able to compare the styles Ali Suli, Adali, Lajlaj, Abbas and Razi, the great players of the Golden Age of Arabian Literature, and that of Ali Shatranji of Timur's Court and Ruy Lopez, Leonardo and Paolo Boi with those of Philidor and the leaders of the Nineteenth century.

The first half of the Nineteenth century witnessed the commencement of Press notice, and the growth of a literature for chess, and was distinguished by the number of works devoted to the play of the game, not half a score of books could be traced in England before Philidor's, besides which Caxton, 1474, dedicated to the Duke of Clarence, Rowbotham, 1561, to the Earl of Leicester, and Saul and Barbiere, 1617 and 1640, to Lucy, Countess of Bedford, which constitute the most noted works recorded, conveyed but little knowledge concerning the game, and were scarcely more than translations of foreign works from that of Jacobus de Cessolus, 1290, and others, and were rather moralities and philosophical treatises than works of practical utility from a scientific point of view.

During the second half, the advance in the appreciation and practice of chess has been yet more astonishing

as compared with the single club in St. James' Street, and the meeting place for chess players in St. Martin's Lane, which existed in Philidor's time, and the thirty clubs or so which had arisen by 1851, we have now at least five hundred, and as against the earliest chess columns in the *Lancet*, *Bell's Life*, and the *Illustrated London News*, we can specify near one hundred. It is among the middle and humbler classes that the spread of a taste for chess has been most apparent, with the fashionable or higher classes, so far as any manifestation of public interest or support is to be taken as a criterion, its appreciation has died out, and for twenty noble names among its patrons in Philidor's time, we cannot reckon one in ours. Another singular feature is the grave diminution in the recognized number of able exponents, commonly called Masters, which in the British list are reduced to less than a third of the well-known names of 1862. The support of chess, trifling as it is, comes from about a score of Her Majesty's subjects, and the total in a year does not now equal a sum very usual in a glove fight, or a Championship Billiard match, and the sums provided in a generation by our present machinery would not equal the value of one Al Mamun's musk balls or the rewards to Ruy Lopez for a single match.

The time allowed for consideration of the moves in chess, and the management of the clocks used to regulate such is a most important element in estimating the relative strength of chess players. So important, in fact, that pure chess, and chess with clocks is found by experience to be a very different thing with certain players. Bird finds the clocks more trouble than the chess, and as everybody knows is heavily handicapped by them, hence his force and success in ordinary play is far greater than in tournaments. Take the time limit alone for two players of equal reputation, who may not be disturbed or distracted by the clocks, a difference in the time limit of ten or even five moves an hour would in some cases turn the scale between them. Passing over the faster Bird; and other English players who prefer the slower rate take a very notable example, Steinitz and Zukertort. After the Criterion Great Tournament of 1883 opinions differed much as to which of these was the stronger player, but after the match at 15 moves an hour, in the United States, won by Steinitz with a score of 10 to 4, the palm has been generally awarded to Steinitz, and without any qualification whatever the term of champion of the chess world has been universally accorded to him and still continues to be so, notwithstanding the superior claims of Dr. Tarrasch based upon victory in three successive International Chess Tournaments, Breslan 1889, Manchester 1890, and Dresden in 1892, in the two first named not losing a single game, and in the last, one only, feats never accomplished by Steinitz.

Zukertort was undoubtedly a far more ready, and we have long thought a finer player than Steinitz, but skill was so nicely balanced between them that a very slight variation or acceleration in rate would have been in Zukertort's favour. At 25 moves an hour or at any faster rate it would have been odds on Zukertort, at 15 moves an hour or less it would have been safer to back Steinitz. Staunton, Kolisch, and Paulsen seem to have been the slowest of the players, 10 moves an hour would suit them better than 15, a 10 or 12 hour game with them was not uncommon. Bird is the fastest, and his best games have averaged 40 moves an hour or two or three hours for a game, a reasonable rate for recreational chess.

In the last century one-and-a-half or two hours was considered a fair duration for a good game, 30 moves an hour would give three hours for a game of 45 moves or four for a game of 60 moves, and such could be finished at the usual sitting without adjournment.

The period dating from the France and England Championship Match between St. Amant and Staunton in 1843, to the Vienna Tournament of 1873, was singularly prolific in very great chess players. In addition to Anderssen 1851, and Morphy 1858, there appeared in the metropolis in 1862 Louis Paulsen, William Steinitz, and J. H. Blackburne, three players who, as well as Captain Mackenzie competed in the British Chess Association's Tournaments of that year, and were destined with Zukertort and Gunsberg of ten years later growth, to rank as conspicuously successful among even the score or so of the pre-eminently distinguished players of the highest class the world has ever produced, the Rev. G. A. MacDonnell and Barnes were of five and Boden of 12 years earlier reputation, all were competing in the 1862 contest, Buckle died in this year, and his opponent Bird had retired from chess, other pursuits entirely absorbing his time

mostly abroad. He had been the hardest fighter and most active of the English combatants of 15 years before, and it was his fate about four years later, once more to become not the least prominent and interesting of the leading chess players.

Chess as now played with the Queen of present powers, imported into the game dates back about four centuries, to near the time when the works of the Spanish writers, Vicenz and Lucena, appeared in 1495, and shortly before that of Damiano the Portuguese in 1512. In 1561 Ruy Lopez, the Spanish priest of Cafra, a name familiar to the present generation, from one of the openings most approved in modern practice being named after him, wrote the best work of a scientific character which had appeared in Europe to that time, and he was considered in Spain the very best player in the world, until the memorable contests between him and Leonardo da Cutri, and Paolo Boi of Syracuse left the question of supremacy doubtful. These famous struggles are reverted to not without interest in our days, when the not very profitable task of attempting to institute comparisons between past and present great players is indulged in, for in the absence of a single published complete and annotated game until the 19th century, there is little advantage in conjecturing whether Al Suli was equal to Philidor, Razi or Greco to A. McDonnell of Belfast, Ali Shatranji to La Bourdonnais, Paoli Boi to Anderssen, Ruy Lopez to Staunton, or Leonardo to Morphy, though these conjectural comparisons in varied forms are not uncommon in modern chess talk.

The records of incidents, and the anecdotes appertaining to chess or chess players in the middle ages, are so scattered, scant, and meagre, that no writer has attempted to put them into shape, or make a consecutive or connected narrative of them. Even Professor Duncan Forbes the most elaborate of all the European writers on the history of chess, dismisses the period from 750 to 1500 A.D., in a very few words not vouchsafing to it in his volume of 400 pages a chapter of a single page, though his book able as it is, contains much description of games of the past in different countries, the interest in which seems not considerable in present days. The Hon. Daines Barrington writing in 1787, says, (and others have followed him to a like effect), "Our ancestors certainly played much at chess before the general introduction of cards, as no fewer than twenty-six English families have emblazoned chess boards and chess rooks on their arms, and it therefore must have been considered as a valuable accomplishment."

The opinions so commonly entertained and expressed, however, so far at least as they can be taken to apply to the period before Queen Elizabeth's reign, rest upon but slender data, and it is highly probable that even in that monarch's reign the practice of chess was confined to a very limited circle for we read of no fine player, great games, or matches, or public competitions of any kind, in our climes until Philidor's time; his career in England though intermittant extended close upon fifty years and from his time may be dated the budding forth of the popularity of chess, which began to come to full bloom about 1828, (33 years after his death) and produced its fruits in the France and England championship contests of 1834 and 1843, and the inception of International Tournaments in 1851 which first established Germany's great reputation and furnished a chess champion of the world from among them.

Though the contests between the rival champions of Spain and Italy, were promoted as tests of skill, at the courts of Philip and Sebastian, and rewarded with a liberality unheard of, since the days of Chosroes and Al Mamun, and took place during the contemporary reign of Queen Elizabeth, when chess had become decidedly fashionable in England, we find no record of the games, or that any interest or enthusiasm appears to have been evoked by them in any country except those where they took place. They seem to have led to no emulation in other parts of Europe, and we read of no chess competitions of any kind in France, Germany, or England. It was not till a century later that the debut and successes of the brilliant Greco the Calabrian, in Paris, began to cause a little more chess ambition in France and gave the ascendancy in the game to that country which it still held in Legalle and Philidor's time in 1750, and continued to maintain until the matches of 1834, between Alex. McDonnell of Belfast and the famous Louis de La Bourdonnais of Paris, followed in 1843 by Staunton's victory over M. S. Amant, first advanced British claims to a first class position in chess, and left our countryman Staunton the admitted world's champion in chess, until the title was wrested from

him by Professor Anderssen of Breslau, in the International tournament held in London during the Exhibition year 1851.

The career of England's champion, Staunton, for about ten years successful as it was, is considered generally to have been even surpassed by that of Anderssen which lasted till his death in 1879 near thirty years. Their chess performances like those of Philidor from 1746 to 1795, and of Paul Morphy from 1855 to 1858, would well merit full record in a longer work.

NOTE. A translation of Greco was published in London in 1656, with a likeness of Charles the First in it.

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Space precludes the admission of the sketches and comparisons of the chess careers of Philidor, Staunton, Anderssen, and Morphy, and confines us to the brief account of Philidor's extraordinary support and influence on the future of chess and such references as occur in the sketches of Simpson's.

Continuously from the date of Philidor's death in 1795, to the ascendancy of Deschappelles in 1820, France maintained the lead in chess which she had held for one hundred and fifty years, producing in the interval the famous de La Bourdonnais, who for genius, invention and force has never been excelled, and may be ranked with Anderssen, whose supremacy for Germany first became manifested in 1851, and the unparalleled Paul Morphy, of New Orleans, who in 1857 and 1858, electrified the whole chess world by his signal successes in New York, London and Paris.

Taking strength, style, and rapidity of conception combined, these are probably the three greatest players which the world has produced since Al Suli in the Tenth century who was considered a marvel among the best of the Eastern players, and Paolo Boi, Leonardo and Ruy Lopez in the Sixteenth century.

Even in the pools at Paris in 1820, when Deschappelles essayed to give the pawn and move to La Bourdonnais and Cochrane, and in a boastful manner challenged the whole world on the same terms the superiority of La Bourdonnais was already manifested, and for succeeding years became unquestionable.

There are yet remaining old chess enthusiasts who recall with pleasure the satisfaction of the British chess circle at the zeal and prowess of Alexander McDonnell, of Belfast, on his appearance in London in 1828, and his continued pluck, perseverance and improvement, and gallant stand against the most formidable of French or living chess players, and which first began to establish English chess claims to equality with France and the very learned German school which had sprung up of which Dr. Bledow, Heydebrand Der Lasa, Hanstein and Bilguer soon became like Anderssen so especially distinguished. Staunton, a household word in chess, first came decisively to the front in 1840, the year in which La Bourdonnais died. McDonnell had already departed in 1837. They lie close together in the northwest corner of Kensal Green Cemetery. Staunton became the recognised English Champion, and by defeating St. Amant, the French representative, and all other players he encountered, further enhanced British chess reputation by upholding his title against all comers, until his wane and defeat by Anderssen, of Breslau, in the First International Tournament of 1851, a result quite unexpected at home and abroad, but subsequent events confirmed what the character of Staunton's play in this competition seemed to indicate that he had passed his best, for two English amateurs, very young, but rising into fame, not then considered by any means equal in force to Staunton, yet fully held their own in 1852 against Anderssen, the first great German conqueror in games which Germany has ever held in very high estimation.

In British chess circles, H. T. Buckle, writer and historian was now the most patient and scientific of the players. S. S. Boden, the most learned and profound, H. E. Bird the most rapid, ready and enthusiastic. The last-named, a favourite opponent of the English leaders, also encountered one by one the phalanx of great

Foreign players assembled, such as Anderssen himself, Szen, Lowenthal, Kieseritzky, Harrwitz and Horwitz, and sustained our chess reputation, particularly in those dashing contests of short duration, which exigencies of time and other pursuits alone rendered practicable. The years 1853 to 1857 were not notable for first-class chess contests. Boden and Bird had both retired. The appearance of the invincible Paul Morphy from America in 1858, caused a revival of chess; he came to play a great match with Staunton, but no individual contest ever took place between them. Barnes a very strong amateur chess player encountered Morphy but lost by a large majority. Boden next came forth from his retirement and played some excellent games with him. Bird, long out of chess happening to return from a long absence abroad, also met him, but neither English player proved equal to Morphy, and it was regretted that the more experienced Staunton would not, and that Buckle could not test conclusions with him, Lowenthal and Paulsen had both been defeated by Morphy in America, and the young American proved decisively successful in matches against Lowenthal and Anderssen in London [Paris], and Harrwitz in Paris.

NOTE. Schallop, Dufresne and Alexis at the Berlin Chess Club pointed out the great appreciation by Anderssen for these games when Bird was in Berlin some years ago.

### CHESS HISTORY AND REMINISCENCES

## THE ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY OF CHESS

When it first entered my thoughts to say a few words about chess and its principal exponents during the Nineteenth century, and particularly of the forty years during which I have been in the circle, any idea of inquiring or examining into, and much less of attempting to reconcile the many conflicting theories so well known to exist in regard to the early history and progress of the game, had never once occurred to me. Like many others, I was slightly acquainted with Professor Forbes' important work of 1860, in which the age of chess was fixed at about 5,000 years, and India assigned as its birthplace; and I was more or less familiar with the theories advanced as to its supposed first introduction into Europe and also into our own country. That the assumed great starting point of chess on a board of sixty-four squares (as at present used), with thirty-two figures, and played by two persons, was Persia, and that the time was during the reign of Chosroes Cosrues, or Khosrus (as it is variously written), about A.D. 540, was to the limited few who took any particular interest in the matter, considered, if not altogether absolutely free from doubt, certainly one of the best attested facts in early chess history; whilst the opinions of Sir William Jones (1763), the Rev. R. Lambe (1764), Hon. Daines Barrington (1787), F. Douce, Esq. (1793), and Sir Frederick Madden (1832), to the effect that chess first found its way into England from France after the first Crusade, at about. A.D. 1100, were, I know—although unfounded and erroneous—generally accepted as embodying the most probable theory.

The circumstance which first induced me to take some additional interest in this question of chess origin, was the perusal of the lines attributed to Pope (quoted by Forbes at the foot of Chapter XII of his book), and the vague and uncertain, and I now think unreasonable date fixed for our own probable first knowledge of the game, though concurred in with tolerable unanimity by so many ancient writers among those regarded as the chief authorities on the subject.

This, however, is not all, for in regard to the European origin of the game of chess, as to which there is such a consensus of agreement; it may be that all the authors are yet still more at fault; for with one accord they all assume that chess reached Europe from Persia not earlier than the sixth century, the Arabs and Saracens getting it about A.D. 600, Spain and the Aquitaine Dominions being commonly pointed to as the countries which first received it from the Arabs or Saracens in Europe after the Persian period above named. There is no indication in any of the works of a notion of the knowledge and practice of chess in Europe at an earlier date, so it appears not unreasonable to conclude that the following extract, which applies to a period seven hundred years before the Persian epoch, must have entirely escaped the notice of all the writers. The article occurs in the "Biographical Dictionary of the Society for Diffusing Useful Knowledge" (Longman Co., Vol.

I, Part II, pp. 842, 512), under the head of "Ahenobarbus." The following is an extract of the Biography, which is given in full in the Appendix:

"Ahenobarbus triumphed at Rome for his victory over Averni, and, according to Cicero, over the Allobroges also, in B.C. 120. In their Consulship (B.C. 115), Ahenobarbus and his colleague, L. Coecilius Metellus Dalmatius, prohibited all scenic exhibitions at Rome, except that of the Latin flute players, and all games of chance, except Chess or Draughts,

(Signed) W. B. D.  
(Presumably William Bodham Donne.)

The contributions of W. B. D. are not frequent in the Biography as those of Duncan Forbes, Aloys Sprenger, Pascual de Gayangos, and William Plates are, and he does not apparently write, like them, as an authority upon Eastern questions, and I might have overlooked this reference to chess had I not read through the whole of the volumes.

It will be observed that both Chess and Draughts are referred to in the notice, which is important, for had chess alone been mentioned, it is probable that exception would be taken that the game was but a species of the latter; it is doubtful, also, whether Ludus Latrunculorum, a game of the Romans, might not also have been suggested.

I cannot find any writer who has referred to chess in Rome or elsewhere at this period, and it is not improbable that the extract given may cause some little astonishment to those well-known writers who have assumed that the Romans knew nothing of chess till some centuries later. The generally accepted theory is that chess reached Persia from India in the sixth century of our era during Chosroes' reign, as stated by Lambe, 1764; Bland, 1850; and others; and this is almost universally concurred in. The practice of chess in Rome, as indicated by the foregoing edict seven hundred years before, may, however, tend somewhat to disturb all existing theories as to its first European origin, and it will be of interest to know what the learned in such matters will think in regard to it, while it may tend to closer investigation by more learned and able men, who have already devoted attention to the subject, and have greater facilities for extracting reliable information.

Spain is stated by all authorities to be the first country in Europe where chess was known, 600 to 700 A.D. being the period assigned. The Franks and Aquitaines had it very soon afterwards, certainly in Charles Martell's reign, and evidence that the game was held in high esteem during the reigns of his successors, Pepin and Charlemagne, may now be regarded as perfectly satisfactory.

As the views of Pope before referred to represent something like those of many others, and they may not be altogether devoid of interest in the present day, I append them, with Forbes' sweeping animadversions thereon. The lines which have been published as original (or without acknowledgment) by more than one chess writer in modern magazines, are as follows:

"When and where chess was invented is a problem which we believe never will be solved. The origin of the game recedes every day further back into the regions of the past and unknown. Individuals deep in antiquarian lore have very praiseworthy puzzled themselves and their readers in vain, in their endeavours to ascertain to their satisfaction how this wonderful pastime sprang into existence.

"Whether it was the product of some peaceful age, when science and philosophy reigned supreme, or whether it was nurtured amid the tented field of the warrior, are questions which it is equally futile and unnecessary now to ask. Sufficient for us that the game exists, and that it has been sung of by Homer, that it has been the delight of kings, scholars, and philosophers in almost every age; that it is now on the flood tide of success,

and is going on its way gathering fresh votaries at every step, and that it seems destined to go down to succeeding ages as an imperishable monument of the genius and skill of its unknown founder."

Forbes introduces this article by observing: "Pope has much to answer for as the originator of a vast deal of rhetorical rubbish upon us in chess lectures and chess articles in periodicals. Here (he says), for example, is a fair stereotype specimen of this sort," and he concludes: "We recommend the above eloquent moreceaux, taken from a chess periodical now defunct, to the attention of chessmen at chess reunions, chess lectures, and those who are ambitious to do a spicy article for a chess periodical."

This appears somewhat severe on Pope, even if it be reasonable and consistent, which may be doubted; for Forbes himself, writing to the "Chess Player's Chronicle," in 1853, about 120 years after Pope, and seven years before the appearance of his own "History of Chess," thus expressed himself:

"In the present day it is impossible to trace the game of chess with moral certainty back to its source amidst the dark shades of antiquity, but I am quite ready to prove that the claim of the Hindoos as the inventors, is far more satisfactory than that of any other people."

Pope needs no defenders. There are writers of more recent date, who have inflicted what Forbes would probably call more rhetorical rubbish upon chess readers. Here is one other example, which appeared in 1865:

"Though the precise birth and parentage of chess are absolutely unknown, yet a light marks the track of this royal personage adown the ages, by which we may clearly enough discern one significant note of his progress, that he has always kept the very best of company. We find him ever in the bosom of civilization, the companion of the wise and thoughtful, the beloved of the studious and mild. Barbarous men had to be humanized and elevated before he would come to them. While the East remained the better part of the world he confined himself to the East; when the West was to be regenerated he attended with the other agents of beneficial destiny, and helped the good work on. He seems to have entered Europe on two opposite sides. Along with philosophy and letters Spain and Portugal received him, with other good gifts, from their benefactors the Saracens; and he is seen in the eighth century at Constantinople, quietly biding his time for a further advance. >From that time to the present, chess has been the delight of kings and kaisers, of the reflecting, the witty, and the good."

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The Indian and American views will be found in the sequel.

It is a peculiar and distinguishing characteristic in the very long life of chess, that at no period of its existence has any attempt ever been made to place on record a narrative of its events, either contemporary or retrospective, or to preserve its materials and to construct a lasting history for it; and, notwithstanding, the enormous advance and increase in chess appreciation and chess reporting in 19th century ages, it will not, perhaps, be very rash to predict that a future generation will be scarcely better informed of our chess doings than we are of the past, and that the 20th century will, in this respect, be to the 19th as that is to the 18th and preceding ones. The valuable scientific and weighty works of Dr. Hyde, Sir William Jones, and Professor Duncan Forbes were mostly devoted to chess in the East, and to arguments on the probabilities of its origin and proofs that it came from India. The book of Forbes, the most elaborate and latest of them, is much devoted to the Sanskrit translations of the accounts of the ancient Hindu Chaturanga; and descriptions of other games which, however able and interesting from a scientific point of view, observation and experience seem to indicate to us, few care to follow or study much in the present day.

The period of 750 to 1500 is dismissed by Forbes in less than a single page. His work contains no account of



Philidor or his works, nor of the progress of chess in this century up to 1860 when his own book appears, and makes no mention of modern chess events or players and it is an expensive work when viewed by popular notions on the subject. These foregoing works with the admirable contributions and treatises of the Rev. R. Lambe, the Hon. Daines Barrington, F. Douce, H. Twiss, P. Pratt, Sir F. Madden, W. Lewis, Sarratt, George Walker, C. Kenny, C. Tomlinson, Captain Kennedy, Staunton and Professor Bland all combined fail to supply our wants, besides which there is no summing up of them or their parts, or attempt to blend them into one harmonious whole, and each writer has appeared too well satisfied with his own conclusions to care to trouble himself much about those of anybody else.

The Spanish, Portuguese, Italian and French writers who refer to chess, and in our own country Chaucer, Lydgate, Caxton, Barbiere, Pope, Dryden, Philidor, and the Encyclopaedists deal mainly with traditions, each having a pet theory; all, however, conclude by declaring in words, but slightly varied, that the origin of chess is enshrouded in mist and obscurity, lost in the remote ages of antiquity, or like Pope pronounce it a problem which never will be solved.

The incomparable game of chess, London, 1820, says, under "Traditions of Chess." Some historians have referred to the invention of chess to the philosopher Xerxes, others to the Grecian Prince Palamedes, some to the brothers Lydo and Tyrrhene and others, again, to the Egyptians, the Chinese, the Hindus, the Persians, the Arabians, the Irish, the Welsh, the Araucanians, the Jews, the Scythians, and, finally, their fair Majesties Semiramis and Zenobia also prefer their claims to be considered as the originators of chess.

Chess history, it may be assumed, has never been regarded as a very profitable subject to write upon; and, even in these days of very advanced appreciation of chess, it is highly probable, that only a very few among the more curious of its admirers, who care to consider the basis and essence of things, will take any particular interest in this branch of the subject; but it is just for such that we venture to submit a very brief outline of what we find suggested from the fairest inferences, which can be gathered from existing information, as to the source from whence our favourite and charming game first sprung.

Enquiries as to the habits and the idiosyncrasies of chess players known to fame, have, always, appeared to be of interest, and have been frequent and continuous from our earliest recollections, both at home and abroad. We have met with people, who would devote an hour to questions of this sort, who would not care to listen five minutes to chess history or devote that time to look at the finest game. In America, once, a most pertinacious investigator, in for a very long sitting (not an interviewer with his excellent bait and exquisite powers of incision but a genuine home brew), was easily disposed of by the bare mention of the words India, Persia, China, Chaturanga, Chatrang, Shatranji and Chess Masterpieces.

This thirster after knowledge would have absorbed willingly any account of Staunton's appearance and manners, his elevated eyebrows and rolling forehead, Munchausen anecdotes, Havannah cigars and tobacco plantations, Buckle's peculiarities, pedantic and sarcastic Johnsonian's gold-headed walking stick, so often lost yet always found, but once, and the frequent affinity between his hat and the spittoon, the yet greater absence of mind of Morphy and Paulsen and their only speeches, the gallantry, kid gloves, lectures of Lowenthal and his bewilderment on the subject of Charlemagne, the linguistic proficiency of Rosenthal, the chess chivalry, bluntness extreme taciturnity, amorous nature and extreme admiration for English female beauty, of Anderssen, McDonnell's jokes and after dinner speeches, Boden's recollections, Pickwickian and other quotations, and in fact little incidents relative to most of the celebrated chess players, constantly flit through the memory in social chat, which invariably seem to entertain chess listeners whom a minute's conversation about the history, science, or theory of the game would utterly fail to please.

The early censurer of chess in the old Arabian manuscript who declared that the chess player was ever absorbed in his chess "and full of care" may have reflected the chess of his time, but he did not live in the Nineteenth century and had never seen a La Bourdonnais, a McDonnell or a Bird play or he might have

modified his views as to the undue seriousness of chess. The Fortnightly Review in its article of December, 1886 devoted some space to the fancy shirt fronts of Lowenthal, the unsavoury cigars of Winawer, the distinguished friends of one of the writers, the Foreign secretary, denial that Zukertort came over in two ships, and other less momentous matters, so we may assume that the authors who greatly control the destinies of chess could even, themselves, at times appreciate a joke.

Despite however the preference so decidedly evinced on these subjects, concerning which we are advised to say a little, the real origin of chess, the opinions in regard to it and its traditions and fables interest us more, and tempt a few remarks upon prevailing misconceptions which it appears desirable as far as possible to dispel, besides there may yet be a possibility that some of the more learned who admire the game may produce a work more worthy of the subject, which, though perhaps of trifling importance to real science and profound literature, certainly appears to merit, from its many marked epochs, and interesting associations, somewhat more attention than it has ever yet received.

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### CHESS AND OPINIONS IN REGARD TO ITS ORIGIN

Chess is the English name for the most intellectual as well as diverting and entertaining of games. It is called in the East the game of the King, and the word Schach mat, or Shah mat in the Persian language signifies the King is dead, "Checkmate." Chess allows the utmost scope for art and strategy, and gives the most various and extensive employment to the powers of the understanding. Men whose wisdom and sagacity are unquestioned have not hesitated to assert that it possesses qualities which render it superior to all other games, mental as well as physical; it has so much intrinsic interest that it can be played without any stake whatsoever, and it has been so played and by the very finest players, more than all other games put together. The invention of chess has been termed an admirable effort of the human mind, it has been described as the most entertaining game the wit of man has ever devised, and an imperishable monument of human wisdom. It is not a mere idle amusement, says Franklin, partakes rather of the nature of a science than a game, says Leibnitz and Sir Walter Scott, and would have perished long ago, say the Americans if it had not been destined to live for ever.

The earliest opinion found on record concerning chess, after the Muslim commentaries on the Koran passage concerning lots and images, is from a philosopher of Basra named Hasan, of celebrity in his day, who died A.D. 728, who modestly and plainly termed it "an innocent and intellectual amusement after the mind has been engrossed with too much care or study."

In our age, Buckle, foremost in skill, who died at Damascus in 1862, and more recently Professor Ruskin and very eminent divines have expressed themselves to a like effect; highly valuing the power of diversion the game affords and giving reasons for its preference over other games; Buckle called his patiently hard contested games of three, four or five hours each a half-holiday relief; Boden and Bird, two very young rising amateurs, then approaching the highest prevailing force at the time would, to Buckle's dismay, rattle off ten lively skirmishes in half the time he took for one. The younger of the two aspirants became in 1849 a favourite opponent of the distinguished writer and historian whom, however, he somewhat disconcerted at times by the rapidity of his movements and once, and once only, the usually placid Buckle falling into an early snare as he termed it; and emulating Canute of old and Lord Stair in modern times got angry and toppled over the pieces.

Colonel Stewart used frequently to play at chess with Lord Stair who was very fond of the game; but an unexpected checkmate used to put his Lordship into such a passion that he was ready to throw a candlestick or anything else that was near him, at his adversary: for which reason the Colonel always took care to be on his feet to fly to the farthest corner of the room when he said "Checkmate, my Lord."

In older times the narrative is silent as to the temper of Charlemagne when he lost his wager game to Guerin de Montglave, but Eastern annals, the historians of Timur, Gibbon and others tell us that the great potentates of the East, Al Walid, Harun Ar Rashid, Al Mamun and Tamerlane shewed no displeasure at being beaten, but rather appreciated and rewarded the skill of their opponents. They manifested, however, great indignation against those who played deceitfully or attempted to flatter by allowing themselves to be overplayed by their Monarchs.

Concerning the origin of chess considerable misconception has always prevailed, and the traditions which had grown up as to its invention before knowledge of the Sanskrit became first imported to the learned, are various and conflicting, comprising several of a very remarkable and even mythical character, which is the more extraordinary because old Eastern manuscripts, the Shahnama of Persia, the Kalila Wa Dimna, the fables of Pilpay in its translations and the Princess Anna Comnena's history of the twelfth century (all combined) with the admissions of the Chinese and the Persians in their best testimonies to point out and indicate what has been since more fully established by Dr. Hyde, Sir William Jones, Professor Duncan Forbes and native works, that for the first source of chess or any game with pieces of distinct and various moves, powers and values we must look to India and nowhere else, notwithstanding some negative opposition from those who do not attempt to say where it came from or to contravert the testimony adduced by Dr. Hyde, Sir William Jones and Professor Duncan Forbes, and despite the opinion of the author of the Asiatic Society's M.S. and Mill in British India that the Hindoos were far too stupid to have invented chess or anything half so clever.

Not a particle of evidence has ever yet been adduced by any other nation of so early a knowledge of a game resembling chess, much less of its invention, and it is in the highest degree improbable that any such evidence ever will be forthcoming.

NOTE. There are some who do not concur in this wholesale reflection on Indian intelligence, among others, may be mentioned Sir William Jones, Professor Wilson, a writer in Fraser's, and Professor Duncan Forbes.

### **AS TO THE SUPPOSED ORIGIN OF CHESS**

One of Sir William Jones' Brahman correspondents, Radha Kant, informed him that it is stated in an old Hindoo law book, that the wife of Ravan King of Lanka, the capital of Ceylon invented chess to amuse him with an image of war, when his metropolis was besieged by Rama in the second age of the world, and this is the only tradition which takes precedence in date of the Hindu Chaturanga.

The Princess Anna Comnena in the life of her father Alexius Comnenus, Emperor of Constantinople who died A.D. 1118, informs us that the game of chess which she calls Zatrikion was introduced by the Arabians into Greece, The Arabians had it from the Persians, who say that they themselves did not invent it, but that they received it from the Indians, who brought it into Persia in the time of the Great Chosroes, who reigned in Persia 48 years, and died A.D. 576, he was contemporary with the Emperor Justinian who did A.D. 565.

Of all the claims which have been advanced to the invention and origin of chess, that of the Hindu Game the Chaturanga is the most ancient, and its accounts contain the earliest allusion worthy of serious notice to anything partaking of the principles and form of chess. The description of it is taken from the Sanskrit text, and our first knowledge of it is obtained through the works of Dr. Hyde, 1693, and Sir William Jones, 1784, Professor Duncan Forbes in a History of Chess, dedicated to Sir Frederic Madden and Howard Staunton, published in 1860, further elaborated the researches of his predecessors and claims by the aid of his better acquaintance with chess, and improved knowledge of the Sanskrit to have proved the Chaturanga as the first form of chess beyond a shadow of doubt. Accounts of it also appear in native works published in Calcutta and Serampore in the first half of this century, and it receives further confirmation in material points, from eminent Sanskrit scholars, who refer to it rather incidentally than as chess-players.

## Chess History and Reminiscences

The accounts of the Hindu Chaturanga (which means game of "four angas," four armies, or "four species of forces," in the native language, Hasty-aswa-ratha-padam, signifying elephants, horses, chariots and foot soldiers) (According to the Amara Kosha, and other native works as explained by Dr. Hyde and Sir William Jones) give a description of the game sufficiently clear to enable anyone to play it in the present day.

NOTE. We have tried it recently. So great of course is the element of luck in the throw, that the percentage of skill though it might tell in the long run is small, perhaps equal to that at Whist.

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With every allowance for more moderate estimates of antiquity by some Sanskrit scholars, the Chaturanga comes before any of the games mentioned in other countries sometimes called chess, but which seem to bear no affinity to it. The oldest of these games is one of China, 2300 B.C., attributed to Emperor Yao or his time, another in Egypt of Queen Hatasu daughter of Thotmes I, 1771 to 1778 B.C., and that inscribed on Medinet Abu at Egyptian Thebes, the palace constructed by Rameses IV (Rhameses Meiammun, supposed grandfather of Sesostris) who according to the scrolls, we are told reigned 1559 to 1493 B.C., and is said to be the monarch represented on its walls. According to the Bible Chronology he would be contemporary with Moses who lived 1611 to 1491 B.C.

The moves of all the pieces employed in the Chaturanga were the same as those made in Asia and Europe down to the close of the Fifteenth century of our era. The Queen up to that time was a piece with only a single square move, the Bishop in the original game was represented by a ship, the Castle or Rook (as it is now indiscriminately called) by an elephant, the Knight by a horse, the two last named have never at any time undergone the slightest change, the alteration in the Bishop consists only in the extension of its power of two clear moves, to the entire command of its own coloured diagonal. The total force on each side taking a Pawn as 1 for the unit was about 26 in the Chaturanga as compared with 32 in our game. There appear ample grounds for believing that the dice used, constituted the greatest if not the main charm in the game with the Brahmans, and that the elimination of that element of chance and excitement, destroyed its popularity with them.

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### THE ANCIENT HINDU CHATURANGA

The Chaturanga signifies the game of four angas, or four species of forces, which, according to the Amira Kosha of Amara Sinha and other authorities means elephants, horses, chariots and foot soldiers, which, in the native tongue is Hasty, aswa, ratha, padatum. It was first brought to notice by the learned Dr. Thomas Hyde of Oxford, in his work *De Ludus Orientalibus*, 1694. About 90 years later the classical Sir William Jones, also of Oxford, who became Judge of the Supreme Court in India from 1783 to 1794 gave translations of the accounts of the Chaturanga. This was at a time when knowledge of Sanskrit had been only just disclosed to European scholars, the code of Gentoo laws, London 1781, being the first work mentioned, though by the year 1830 according to reviews, 760 books had appeared translated from that language, no mention of the Chaturanga is found in Europe before the time of Dr. Hyde, and all the traditionists down to the days of Sir William Jones would seem to have been unacquainted with it. In respect to Asia, so far as can be judged or gathered, the details and essence of the Sanskrit translations mentioned in the biography of the famous and magnificent Al Mamun of Bagdad 813 to 833 or those for the enlightened Akbar 1556 to 1605 are unknown to European scholars; there are no references to any translation of them, or to the nature of those alluded to in the Fihrist of Abu L. Faraj.

Eminent contributors to the *Archaeologia*, F. Douce, 1793, and Sir F. Madden, 1828, adopt the conclusions of Dr. Hyde and Sir William Jones and they receive confirmation from native works of this century, and

incidentally from Sanskrit scholars who wrote not as chess players.

Duncan Forbes, L.L.D., Professor of Oriental languages in King's College, London, is the next great authority upon the Chaturanga; in a work of 400 pages published in 1860 dedicated to Sir Frederic Madden and Howard Staunton, Esq., he further elaborated the investigations of Dr. Hyde and Sir William Jones and claimed by a better acquaintance with chess and choice of manuscripts and improved knowledge of the Sanskrit language to have proved that the game of chess was invented in India and no where else, in very remote times or, as he finally puts it at page 43: "But to conclude I think from all the evidence I have laid before the reader, I may safely say, that the game of chess has existed in India from the time of Pandu and his five sons down to the reign of our gracious Sovereign Queen Victoria (who now rules over these same Eastern realms), that is for a period of five thousand years and that this very ancient game, in the sacred language of the Brahmans, has, during that long space of time retained its original and expressive name of Chaturanga."

The Chaturanga is ascribed to a period of about 3,000 years before our era.

According to the Sanskrit Text of the Bavishya Purana from which the account is taken, Prince Yudhisthira the eldest and most renowned of the five sons of King Pandu, consulted Vyasa, the wise man and nestor of the age as to the mysteries of a game then said to be popular in the country, saying:

"Explain to me, O thou super-eminent in virtue, the nature of the game that is played on the eight times eight square board. Tell me, O my master, how the Chaturaji (Checkmate) may be accomplished."

Vyasa thus replied:

"O, my Prince, having delineated a square board, with eight houses on each of the four sides, then draw up the red warriors on the east, on the south array the army clad in green, on the west let the yellow troops be stationed, and let the black combatants occupy the north.

"Let each player place his Elephant on the left of his King, next to that the Horse, and last of all the Ship, and in each of the four Armies, let the Infantry be drawn up in front. The Ship shall occupy the left hand corner next to it the Horse, then the Elephant, and lastly the King, the Foot Soldiers, as are stated being drawn up in front."

The sage commences general directions for play with the following advice:

"Let each player preserve his own forces with excessive care, and remember that the King is the most important of all."

The sage adds:

"O Prince, from inattention to the humbler forces the king himself may fall into disaster."

"If, on throwing the die, the number should turn up five, the King or one of the Pawns must move; if four, the Elephant; if three, the Horse; and if the throw be two, then, O Prince, the Ship must move."

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### ON THE MOVES OF THE PIECES

"The King moves one square in all directions; the Pawn moves one square straightforward, but smites an

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enemy through either angle, in advance; the Elephant, O Prince of many lands, moves, (so far as his path is clear), In the direction of the four cardinal points, according to his own pleasure. The Horse moves over the three squares in an oblique direction; and the Ship, O Yudhisthira, moves two squares diagonally."

NOTE. The Elephant had the same move as our Rook has, the Horse the same as our Knight. The ship had two clear moves diagonally (a limited form of our Bishop). The King one square in all directions the same as now. The Pawn one square straightforward. There was no Queen in the Chaturanga, but a piece, with a one square move, existed in the two handed modified Chatrang. The Queen, of present powers is first mentioned in the game at the end of the 15th century, when the works of the Spanish writers Lucena and Vicenz appeared in 1495.

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About two thousand six hundred years are supposed to have elapsed between the time of King Pandu, Prince Yudhisthira, Vyasa, and the records of the ancient Chaturanga, to the days of Alexander the Great, to which period the references concerning chess and the Indian Kings contained in Eastern accounts, Firdausi's Persian Shahnama and the Asiatic Society's M.S. presented to them by Major Price, relate.

NOTE. The Shahnama, it is recorded, occupied thirty years in its preparation and contains one hundred and twenty thousand verses.

The long interval of three or four thousand years, between the date ascribed to the Chaturanga, and its reappearance as the Chatrang in Persia, and the Shatranj in Arabia, has perplexed all writers, for none can offer a vestige of trace of evidence, either of the conversion of Chaturanga into Chatrang or Shatranj; or that the game ever continued to be practiced in its old form either with or without the dice, it is conjectured merely, that when the dice had to be dispensed with, as contrary to the law and the religion of the Hindus and when such laws were vigorously enforced, it then became a test of pure skill only, and was probably more generally engaged in by two competitors than four; but, it appears reasonable, when we recollect the oft translated story of Nala, and the evident fascination of the dice to the Hindus, to suppose that the dice formed far too an important element in the Chaturanga to be so easily surrendered; and it is not at all improbable that the prohibition and suppression of the dice destroyed much of its popularity and that the game became much less practiced and ceased to be regarded with a degree of estimation sufficiently high to make it national in character, or deemed worthy of the kind of record likely to be handed down to posterity. Notwithstanding that the moves of Kings, Rooks and Knights in the Chaturanga were the same as they are now, the absence of a Queen, (which even in the two-handed chess was long only represented by a piece with a single square move) and the limited power of the Bishops and Pawns, must have made the Chaturanga a dull affair compared with present chess as improved towards the close of the Fifteenth century; and it is not so very remarkable that it should have occurred to Tamerlane to desire some extension of its principles, even with our present charming and, as some consider, perfect game, we find that during the 17th and 18th centuries, up to Philidor's time not a good recorded game or page of connected chess history is to be found and we may cease to wonder so much at the absence of record for four or three thousand years or more, for a game so inferior to ours. Were the Chaturanga now to be revived without the dice it would probably not prove very popular.

Authorities say "But, unquestionably, the favourite game among the ancient Hindus, was that of chess; a knowledge of which in those primitive times formed one of the requisite accomplishments of a hero, just as skill in chess was considered among us in the palmy days of Chivalry."

What this game was is not explained; beyond the description of the oblong die of four sides, used to determine which piece had to move in the Chaturanga; we have no information how a game of interest could be made with dice alone, as is not easy to understand.

We have no means of ascertaining, says Forbes the exact era at which the Chaturanga passed into the Shatranj, or in other words at what period as the Muhammadans view it, the Hindus invented the latter form of the game. The earlier writers of Arabia and Persia do not agree on the point, some of them placing it as early as the time of Alexander the Great and others as late as that of Naushurawan. Even the poet Firdausi, the very best authority among them though he devotes a very long and a very romantic episode to the occasion of the invention of the Shatranj, is quite silent as to the exact period; all that he lets us know on that point is that it took place in the reign of a certain prince who ruled over northern India and whose name was Gau, the son of Jamhur.

Sir William Jones was Judge of a Supreme Court of Judicature in Bengal, from 27 April, 1783 to 27 April, 1794, when he died at Calcutta. It is recorded that he came much in contact with intelligent Brahmans and was much esteemed. He states on the authority of his friend the Brahman "Radha Kant" "that this game is mentioned in the oldest (Hindu) law books; and that it was invented by the wife of Ravan, King of Lanka, the capital of Ceylon, in order to amuse him with an image of war while his metropolis was closely besieged by Rama in the second age of the world."

NOTE. Sir William Jones says: If evidence be required to prove that chess was invented by the Hindus, we may be satisfied with the testimony of the Persians, who, though as much inclined as other nations to appropriate the ingenious inventions of a foreign people, unanimously agree that the game was imported from the west of India, together with the charming fables of Vishnusarma, in the Sixth century of our era. It seems to have been immemorially known in Hindustan by the name of Chaturanga, that is the four "angas" or members of an army, which are said in the Amarakosha to be Hasty-aswa-ratha-padam, or Elephants, Horses, Chariots and Foot Soldiers, and in this sense the word is frequently used by epic poets in their descriptions of real armies. By a natural corruption of the pure Sanskrit word, it was changed by the old Persians into Chatrang; but the Arabs, who soon after took possession of their country, had neither the initial or final letter of that word in their alphabet, and consequently altered it further into Shatranj, which found its way presently into the modern Persian, and at length into the dialects of India, where the true derivation of the name is known only to the learned. Thus has a very significant word in the sacred language of the Brahmans been transferred by successive changes into axedres, scacchi, echecs, chess and by a whimsical concurrence of circumstances given birth to the English word check, and even a name to the Exchequer of Great Britain!

"The beautiful simplicity and extreme perfection of the game, as it is commonly played in Europe and Asia, convince me that it was invented by one effect of some great genius; not completed by gradual improvements, but formed to use the phrase of the Italian critics, by the first intention, yet of this simple game, so exquisitely contrived and so certainly invented in India. I cannot find any account in the classical writings of the Brahmans."

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Eminent contributors to the Archaeological Society and to Asiatic Researches have adopted the conclusions of the foregoing authors, (Dr. Hyde, Sir W. Jones and Professor Forbes). Francis Douce, Esq., after referring to Dr. Hyde's labours, says, "Yet I shall avail myself of this opportunity of mentioning the latest and perhaps most satisfactory opinion upon this subject; for which we are indebted to the labours of that accomplished scholar Sir William Jones." He has informed us that chess was invented by the Hindoos from the testimony of the Persians who, unanimously, agree that it was imported from the West of India in the Sixth century and immemorially known in Hindustan by the name of Chaturanga or the four members of an army, viz. Elephants, Horses, Chariots and Foot Soldiers.

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Sir F. Madden, 1828, remarks: "It is sufficient, at present, to assume on the authorities produced by the learned Dr. Hyde and Sir William Jones that for the invention and earliest form of this game we must look to India, from whence through the medium of the Persians and the Arabs, as proved demonstratively by the names of the chessmen it was afterwards transmitted to the nations of Europe."

It seems that we may be satisfied that chess is of Asiatic origin, and India its birth place without subscribing entirely to the view that even the ancient Hindu Chaturanga so minutely described and which comes so long before any other game mentioned in China or Egypt is even the first of chess; but we may say this much, that, notwithstanding, the doubts expressed by Crawford in his history and Rajah Brooke in his journal, and the negative opposition of Dr. Van der Linde, we cannot bring ourselves to be skeptical enough to discredit the trustworthiness of the accounts furnished to us in the works of Dr. Hyde, Sir. William Jones and Professor Duncan Forbes of the existence of the game called the Chaturanga at the time stated.

NOTE. The Amara Kosha was one of the most valued works of Amara Sinha one of the nine gems which adorned the throne of Vikramaditya. The period, when he lived, was that from which the Hindoos date their present chronology; that is he lived about the middle of the first century B.C. The Amara Kosha was one of his numerous works preserved, if not the only one that escaped. They perished, it is said, like all other Buddhistical writings at the time of the persecutions raised by the Brahmans against those who professed the religion of Buddha.

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Sanskrit scholars, including Colebrooke and Captain Cox, writing rather incidentally than as chess players, inform us that the pieces used in our game, viz. the Rook, Knight, and Bishop are referred to in old Indian treatises, under their respective names of Elephant, Horse, and Ship, which is a most convincing item of evidence to chess players. This is one of the three main things which historians fail to notice; the Roman Edict of 115 B.C. and 790 to 793 A.D., the least unlikely period for English acquirement of the game, on Alcuin's three years visit from Charlemagne's court, being the two others most meriting attention and noticed in their respective places.

NOTE. The Roman Edict of 115 B.C. exempting chess and Draughts from prohibition, when other games were being interdicted, seems to have escaped the notice of all writers, and does not harmonize with the Germans Weber and Van der Linde's theories of 954 A.D. for the earliest knowledge of chess in its precise form.

NOTE. Alcuin, 735–804, is a name forgotten by all writers in considering the Charlemagne, Koran, and Princess Irene period and English probabilities.

NOTE. The Sanskrit translations for the glorious Al Mamun, 813 to 833, those mentioned in the Sikust (980), and for the enlightened Akbar, 1556 to 1615, seem to have been unknown to European scholars, who throughout the early and middle ages do not strike us as having been remarkable for zeal and application.

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The Chinese claims made apparently rather for than by them, are recorded in the annals of the Asiatic Society as being in respect of a game called "War Kie," played with 360 pieces, said to have been invented by Emperor Yao so far back as B.C. 2300, the next account is of a game called Hsiang Kie, attributed to Wa Wung B.C. 1122, with 16 pieces on each side, like draughts with characters written on each so recently as 1866, it was claimed to be played all over the country. The great dictionary of Arts and Sciences dedicated to our King in 1727, merely says:



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"The Chinese claim to date back their acquaintance with chess to a very remote period." The Chinese call chess the game of the Elephant, and say that they had it from the Indians. The Haipiene or great Chinese Directory under the word Sianghki, says that this happened in the reign of Vouti, about the year of Christ 537. Notwithstanding this statement there is an account of Real Chess given in 1793, by Eyles Irwin, Esq., a gentleman who had passed many years of his life in India, and contained in a communication to the President of the Irish Society. He says 379 years after the time of Confucius (which is equal to 172 B.C.), King Cochu, King of Kiangnan, sent an expedition into the Shensi Country, under the command of a Mandarin, called Hansing, to conquer it, and during the winter season, to allay the discontent of his army at inaction, chess was invented to amuse them, with results entirely satisfactory.

The board, or game, Irwin says, is called Chong Ki or Royal Game. Forbes says the game is called by the Chinese "Choke Choo Hong Ki."

The board is 64 squares with a chasm in the middle, the army 9 pieces, 2 rocket boys, and 5 pawns on each side.

It has become the fashion to this day to dish up the great poets' lines more or less seasoned or to repeat, one or the other of the fabulous stories, or fallacious theories so constantly put forward in regard to the origin of chess, so it may be not amiss to state what is known or can be gathered in regard to it, concerning the claims of countries other than India.

Such consideration as can be found devoted to the game in Egypt mostly relates to hypothesis and conjectures in regard to the inscriptions on tombs and on the walls of temples and palaces; some discussion has arisen in our own time, in notes and queries, and particularly in regard to Mr. Disraeli's references in the book *Alroy*, concerning which the Westminster Chess papers in 1872, instituted a criticism. Chapter 16 of *Alroy* begins "Two stout soldiers were playing chess in a coffee house," and Mr. Disraeli inserts on this the following note (80). "On the walls of the palace of Amenoph II, called Medeenet Abuh, at Egyptian Thebes, the King is represented playing chess with the Queen. This monarch reigned long before the Trojan War."

A critic, calling himself the author of *Fossil Chess* adds "In the same work may be found some account of the paintings on the tombs at Beni Hassan, presumably the oldest in Egypt, dating from the time of Osirtasen I, twenty centuries before the Christian era, and eight hundred years anterior to the reign of Rameses III, by whom the temple of Medeenet Abuh was commenced, and who is the Rameses portrayed on its walls." An unaccountable error on Mr. Disraeli's part in the same note assigns its erection to Amenoph II, who lived 1414 B.C.

Closer investigators of the Hieroglyphics of Ancient Egypt, state Rameses Merammun (15th King of the 18th dynasty and grandfather of Sesostris), who reigned as Ramses IV from 1559 to 1493 B.C., is the name that appears on the great palace of Medinet Abu, and some other buildings in the ruins of Thebes.

According to the tables of Egyptian Chronology most approved in 1827 reviews Sethos or Sesostris reigned as Ramses VI from 1473 to 1418 B.C. The reviews observe that Herodotus thought that Sesostris ascended the throne a few years later than 1360 B.C. Amenophis II reigned from 1687 to 1657 B.C.

The draughtmen and board of Queen Hatasu among her relicts in the Manchester Exhibition of 1887, are assigned to 1600 B.C.; but she was the daughter of Thotmes I, who according to the tables referred to, reigned 1791 to 1778 B.C.

Egyptian chronology seems not to be conclusively agreed upon; however, the game found inscribed on the walls of Medinet Abu is not proved to resemble chess, and is generally assumed to be draughts, besides whether ascribed to Amenoph II 1687 to 1657 B.C., or to Ramses IV 1559 to 1493 B.C.; the date is long after

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the period ascribed to the Sanskrit writings, (said to be about 3000 B.C.) even taking the shortest estimate of the age of the Ancient Hindu and Brahman writings assigned by Sanskrit scholars.

Sir Gardiner Wilkinson says, the pieces are all of the same size and form, and deduces from this the inference that the game represented a species of draughts.

Mr. Lane the Egyptologist, apparently no chess player himself, in describing the sedentary games of Egypt, says that the people of that country take great pleasure in chess, (which they call Sutreng), Draughts (Dameh), and Backgammon (Tawooleh).

Sir F. Madden says, it is however possible that the Ancient Egyptians may also have possessed a knowledge of chess, for among the plates of Hieroglyphics by Dr. Burton No. 1, we find at Medinet Habou two representations of some tabular game, closely resembling it, and I am informed that a more perfect representation exists on the Temples at Thebes.

Sir John Gardiner Wilkinson, the celebrated Egyptologist, in a note appended to Mr. George Rawlinson's of Herodotus says:

"Still more common was the game of Draughts miscalled chess, which is Hab, a word now used by the Arabs for Men or Counters. This was also a game in Greece, where they often drew for the move, this was done by the Romans also in their Duodecim Scripta, and Terence says—

Ti ludis tesseris.  
Si illud, quod maxime opus est facto non cadit.  
Illud quod cecedit forte, id arte ut corrigus.  
Adelph iv. 7. 22-24.

NOTES. According to Dr. Young, 1815, and M. Champollion, 1824, Ramses III was the 15th Monarch of the 18th dynasty, the date affixed to him being 1561 to 1559 B.C., but the British Museum Catalogue, page 60 says: The principal part of the monuments in this room are of the age of King Ramses II, the Sesostris of the Greeks, and the greatest monarch of the 19th dynasty; but, in the tables, he appears as the 14th of the 18th dynasty 1565 to 1561 B.C. and the catalogue is probably a slip.

No consensus of agreement however has been arrived as to Egyptian Chronology. Sesostris for example 1473 to 1418 B.C., (Manetho, the scrolls Young, Champollion) Herodotus thought, ascended the throne about 1360 B.C.

Some Bible Commentators have even called the Shishak of Scripture 558 B.C. Sesostris.

Bishop Warburton was wont to vent his displeasure on those who did not agree with him. For instance, on one Nicholas Mann, whose provocation was that he argued for the identity of Osiris and Sesostris after Warburton had pronounced that they were to be distinguished, he revenged himself by saying to Archbishop Potter in an abrupt way, "I suppose, you know, you have chosen an Arian."

Under Exodus 1 C.B. 1604 a note occurs.

The Pharaoh, in whose reign Moses was born, is known in general history by the name of Rameses IV, surnamed Mei Amoun. He reigned 66 years, which agrees with the account given Ch. 4, 19, that he lived till long after Moses had retired to the desert. The Pharaoh who reigned when the Israelites went out of Egypt was Rameses V surnamed Amenophis.

Moses' birth is under B.C. 1531, Exodus ii., his death under B.C. 1451, Deuteronomy xxxiv., but as he was

120 years old when he died, one of these dates must be wrong, he was probably born B.C. 1571.

Opposite Chapter 14 v.25 of 1st of Kings B.C. 958 says: There can be no rational doubt that this Shishak was the famous Sesostris the conqueror of Asia. Herodotus, the father of profane history, relates that he, himself, has seen stones in Palestine erected by the Conqueror, and recording his achievements.

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It is confidently asserted by the writers of the Eighteenth century, and this, that the ancient Greeks and Romans were totally unacquainted with chess, but a Roman edict of 115. B.C., specially exempting "Chess and Draughts" from prohibition passes unobserved by all the writers; and might have materially qualified their perhaps too hasty and ill-matured conclusions, and have suggested further inquiry into the nature of the sedentary games and amusements practiced and permitted by the Romans.

The Roman edict mentioned by Mr. W. B. Donne, in his biographical sketch of Ahenobarbus, 842, has evidently escaped the observation of all writers on the game. Chess and Draughts are specially exempted in it from the list of prohibited games of chance under date B.C. 115. The Hon. Daines Barrington 1787, Sir F. Madden 1832, Herbert Coleridge, Esq., 1854, and Professor Duncan Forbes 1860 are prominent among those who confidently assert that the Romans as well as the ancient Greeks were quite unacquainted with the game of chess, at least, says Coleridge, without giving any reason for his qualification, before the time of Hadrian. These writers having apparently satisfied themselves that the Romans as well as the Greeks played a game with pebbles, assume therefore that they knew not chess, but might have known a game something like Draughts. Here in the edict, however, Chess and Draughts are both mentioned inferring a recognized distinction between the two. It seems reasonable to assume that the writers would have paused and have searched a little deeper into the nature of the sedentary games which the Romans knew and permitted if they had seen this explicit statement. It has never been suggested by any writer that the Romans ever left an inkling or taste for intellectual pastimes in Britain. The name of Agricola or that of any other Roman is not associated with any tradition or story of the game, even Aristotle and Alexander the Great and Indian Porus (names we find in Eastern accounts) are names not so familiar in speculative traditions as to chess, though less remote, than that of Thoth the Egyptian Mercury who Plato says invented chess "Hermes" (Asiatic M.S.) or the more frequently mentioned Moses, and the Kings of Babylon with their philosophers. The favoured notion that chess (first) came into Europe through the Arabs in Spain about 710 to 715 A.D. may yet prove ill matured and require modification, and for English first knowledge of the game, we may on inferential and presumptive evidence prefer the contemporary period of Offa, Egbert and Alcuin when Charlemagne, the Greek Emperors and the Khalifs of the East so much practised and patronized the game, rather than the conquest or Crusaders theory of origin among us, which is also beside inconsistent with incidents related in the earlier reigns of Athelstan, Edgar and Canute, and moreover is not based upon any direct testimony whatever.

In proof of the ancient use of chess among the Scandinavians. In the Sages of Ragnar Lodbrog printed in Bioiners collection, and in an ancient account of the Danish invasion of Northumberland in the Ninth century entitled Nordymbra, it is stated that after the death of Ragnar, messengers were sent to his sons in Denmark by King Alla to communicate the intelligence and to mark their behaviour when they received it. They were thus occupied, Sigurd Snakeseye played at chess with Huitzeck the bold; but Biorn Ironside was polishing the shaft of a spear in the middle of the hall. As the messengers proceeded with their story Huitzeck and Sigurd dropped their game and listened to what was said with great attention, Ivar put various questions and Biorn leant on the spear he was polishing. But when the messengers came to the death of the chief, and told his expiring words that the young bears would gnarl their tusks (literally grunt) if they knew their parent's fate, Biorn grasped the handle of his spear so tight with emotion that the marks of his fingers remained on it, and when the tale was finished dashed it in pieces, Huitzeck compressed a chessman he had taken so with his fingers that the blood started from each whilst Sigurd Snakeseye paring his nails with a knife was so wrapped

up in attention that he cut himself to the bone without feeling it.

All authorities down to the end of the Eighteenth century, ascribe the first knowledge of chess in England, to the time of the reign of William the Conqueror, or to that of the return of the first Crusaders, some adding not earlier than 1100 A.D., H. T. Buckle the author and historian who was foremost in skill among chess amateurs, in his references to the game, satisfied apparently with the evidence of Canute's partiality for it, (1017 to 1035) thought it probable that it was familiarly known in England a century or so before that monarch's reign. Sir Frederick Madden writing from 1828 to 1832 at the outset of his highly interesting communications to the Asiatic Society, at first inclined to the Crusaders theory, but upon further investigation later in his articles he arrived at the conclusion that chess might have been known among us in Athelstan's reign from 925 to 941, and Professor Forbes writing from 1854 to 1860 concurred in that view. Both of these authorities after quoting old chess incidents and anecdotes of Pepin's and Charlemagne's times with other references to chess in France, Germany, and Scandinavia, then pass on to chess in England, and after asserting the probability that the Saxons most likely received chess from their neighbours the Danes then fix apparently somewhat inconsistently so late as the Tenth century for it. They assert that the tradition of the game having been brought from the North certainly existed, and is mentioned by Gaimar who wrote about the year 1150, when speaking of the mission of Edelwold from King Edgar to the castle of Earl Orgar, in Devonshire to verify the reports of his daughter Elstreuth's beauty. When he arrived at the mansion,

"Orgar juout a un esches,  
Un gin k'il aprist des Daneis,  
Od lui juout Elstruat lu bele,  
Sus ciel n'ont donc tele damesele."

"Orgar was playing at the chess,  
A game he had learnt of the Danes,  
With him played the fair Elstreuth,  
A fairer maiden was not under heaven."

Edgar reigned from 958 to 975, English history referring to this incident among the amours of Edgar, make no mention of the Earl of Devonshire and his daughter being found playing chess together. Hume says Elfrida was daughter and heir of Olgar Earl of Devonshire and though she had been educated in the country, and had never appeared at court, she had filled all England with the reputation of her beauty.

The mission of Earl Athelwold, his deception of the king, and marriage of Elfrida follows, next the king's discovery, the murder of Athelwold by the King, and his espousal of Elfrida.

This incident with others, such as the presentation to Harold Harfagra, King of Norway of a very fine and rich chess table, and the account of and description of seventy chess men of different sizes belonging to various sets dug up in the parish of Uig, in the Isle of Lewis, are referred to by the writers as the chess allusions of the North, but Sir Frederick Madden who confines himself to the supposition of the Saxons having received the game from the Danes, rather disregards a statement of Strutt, Henry and others, based on a passage in the Ramsey chronicle that chess was introduced among the Saxons, so early as the Tenth century. Forbes however who usually agrees with Madden, sees no improbability in it or grounds for disputing, and thinks that England may have obtained its knowledge from France between the Eighth and Tenth centuries. It is curious that Forbes stops here like Madden and all other writers, he evidently knew nothing of the Roman edict of 115 B.C., and neither of them cast a thought to the earlier reigns of Alfred, Egbert, and Offa, which were contemporary with the Golden Age of Literature in Arabia and the period when chess had so long travelled from Persia to other countries, and was so well known and appreciated in Arabia; Constantinople, Spain, and among the Aquitaines as well as by the Carolingian Monarchs. Al Walid the first Khalif noted for chess, the most powerful of the house of Umeyyah, who (through his generals Tarak and Musa invaded, conquered, and entered Spain, reigned from 705 to 715 B.C.), and comes before Offa, whose reign commenced five years after the foundation of the mighty Abbasside Dynasty, which displaced the first house

of Umeyyah, and thirteen years before that of Charlemagne, with whom he was contemporary 26 years, and Egbert was 13 years. Harun Ar Rashid; of Abbasside, the Princess Irene, and the Emperor Nicephorus of Constantinople, and the successors of Harun, viz., Al Amin, Al Mamun, the Great Al Mutasem and Al Wathik (the two last contemporary with our Alfred), all cultivated and practiced chess and the strongest inference, and a far more striking one than any yet adduced, is that we got chess during the long reign of Charlemagne, and his Greek, Arabian and Spanish contemporaries, and this might well happen, for Charlemagne knew both Offa and Egbert (the latter personally), and the knowledge becomes somewhat more than a matter of inference, for the Saxon scholar Alcuin was in England from 790 to 793, on a farewell visit after being domesticated in Charlemagne's household as his treasured friend, adviser, and tutor and preceptor in the sciences for more than twenty years, and could not be otherwise than familiar with the Emperor's practice and enthusiasm for chess, in which he may to some extent have shared. Alcuin would certainly have communicated a game like this, in which he knew other civilized people were taking so much interest, to his countrymen. The connecting links of evidence which Sir F. Madden and Professor Forbes have illustrated in Athelstan's and Edgar's reigns, would have been greatly strengthened and confirmed, if they had thought of Alcuin's residence and influence at a court where chess was not only played, but talked about and corresponded upon. Charlemagne's presents included the wonderful chess men which he valued so highly, and with which we are tolerably familiar through the reports of Dr. Hyde, F. Douce, Sir F. Madden, and H. Twiss, and the engravings in Willeman's work, and by Winckelman and Art Journal. These chessmen (still preserved) were perhaps often seen by Alcuin and were possibly also shewn by Charlemagne to the youthful Egbert when in refuge at his court, and on the whole it seems unreasonable to assume that chess was unknown in England after Alcuin's last sojourn, and during Egbert's reign.

It may be also that on further consideration of the Roman edict and references to their games, and the accounts relating to the fourth century B.C., many will be indisposed to accept the dictum that Herodotus, Plato and Aristotle meant nothing more than a game of pebbles, when they referred to chess and propounded their theories as to its invention.

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### PERSIA

"Khusra Anushirawan" Naushirawan or Chosroes as he is more frequently called, being the Byzantine title applied to him, was King of Persia and reigned 48 years, from 528 to 576 as stated by some authors, or from 531 to 579 according to others. He is described also as Chosroes the Just. The receipt of chess in Persia from India early in his reign, and the great appreciation and encouragement of it, is the best attested fact in chess history, if not really the only one as to which there is entire concurrence in opinion among all writers.

The Persian and Arabian historians are unanimous that the game of chess was invented in India, some time previous to the Sixth century of our Era, and was introduced into Persia during the reign of Kisra Naushirawan, the Chosroes of the Byzantine historians, and the contemporary of Justinian, they differ only as to the time of its modification, some ascribing it to about this period, and others to that of Alexander the Great, 336 to 323 B.C.

Although several works concur in stating that chess first came to Persia from India, through Burzuvia the physician, most learned in languages with the materials of the book called Culila Dimna, quite early in Chosroes' reign, some think differently and attribute Burzuvia's mission to India and return to a late date. It is related from the Shahnama, the great Persian poem that it came from Kanoj, Kanauj, commonly written Canoge, by means of a magnificent embassy from the King of Hind, accompanied by a train of elephants with rich canopies, together with a thousand camels heavily laden, the whole escorted by a numerous and gallant army of Scindian cavalry. After depositing the various and costly presents, last of all the Ambassador displayed before the King and the astonished court, a chess board, elaborately constructed together with the

chessmen, tastefully and curiously carved from solid pieces of ivory and ebony. Then the Ambassador presented a letter richly illumined, written by the hand of the Sovereign of Hind, to Naushirawan the translation of which is given as follows:

The King of Hind's address to Chosroes with the Chess

"O, King, may you live as long as the celestial spheres continue to revolve; I pray of you to examine this chess board, and to lay it before such of your people as are most distinguished for learning and wisdom. Let them carefully deliberate, one with another; and if they can, let them discover the principles of this wonderful game. Let them find out the uses of the various pieces, and how each is to be moved, and in to what particular squares. Let them discover the laws which regulate the evolutions of this mimic army, and the rules applicable to the Pawns, and to the Elephants, and to the Rukhs (or warriors), and to the Horses, and to the Farzin, and to the King. If they should succeed in discovering the principles and expounding the practice of this rare game, assuredly they will be entitled to admission into the number of the wise, and in such case I promise to acknowledge myself, as hitherto, your Majesty's tributary. On the other hand, should you and the wise men of Iran collectively fail in discovering the nature and principles of this cunning game, it will evince a clear proof that you are not our equals in wisdom; and consequently you will have no right any longer to exact from us either tribute or impost. On the contrary we shall feel ourselves justified in demanding hereafter the same tribute from you; for man's true greatness consists in wisdom, not in territory, and troops, and riches, all of which are liable to decay."

When Naushirawan had perused the letter from the Sovereign of Hind, long did he ponder over its contents. Then he carefully examined the chess board and the pieces and asked a few questions of the Envoy respecting their nature and use.

The latter, in general terms, replied, Sire, what you wish to know can be learned only by playing the game, suffice it for me, to say, that the board represents a battle field, and the pieces the different species of forces engaged in the combat. Then the King said to the Envoy, grant us the space of seven days for the purpose of deliberation; on the eighth day we engage to play with you the game, or acknowledge our inferiority.

Then followed the assembling of the men esteemed learned and wise, the sages of Iran, and seven days of perplexity. At last Buzerjmihir hastened to the presence of Naushirawan and said: "O, King of victorious destiny, I have carefully examined this board and these pieces, and at length by your Majesty's good fortune, I have succeeded in discovering the nature of the game. It is a most shrewd and faithful representation of a battle field, which it is proper your Majesty should inspect in the first place. In the mean time let the Indian Ambassador be summoned into the royal presence together with the more distinguished among his retinue, also a few of the wise and learned of our own court that they may all bear witness how we have acquitted ourselves in accomplishing the task imposed upon us by the King of Kancj. When Buzerjmihir had explained the evolutions of the ebony and ivory warriors, the whole assembly stood mute in admiration and astonishment. The Indian Ambassador was filled with mingled vexation and surprise, he looked upon Buzerjmihir as a man endowed with intelligence far beyond that of mere mortals, and thus he pondered in his own mind: How could he have discovered the nature and principles of this profound game? Can it be possible that he has received his information from the sages of Hind? Or is it really the result of his own penetrating research, guided by the acuteness of his unaided judgment? Assuredly Buzerjmihir has not this day his equal in the whole world. In the meanwhile Naushirawan in public acknowledged the unparalleled wisdom of his favourite Counsellor. He sent for the most costly and massive goblet in his palace and filled the same with the rarest of jewels. These, together with a war steed, richly caparisoned, and a purse full of gold pieces he presented to Buzerjmihir."

The other version of the first receipt of chess in Persia, based upon eastern works and perhaps more reasonable, if not resting upon yet better attestation, records that Burzuvia, a physician, and the most expert

that could be found in the knowledge of languages, and art and ability in acquiring them, at the request or command of Chosroes, King of Persia, undertook to explore the national work of the Brahmans and the famous book, the Kurtuk Dunmix, and the result of his mission and labours were, after considerable research in India, the materials for and production of the Culila Dinma, a national work greatly treasured by Chosroes and future kings of Persia, and which work contained the art of playing chess. This work is said to have been jointly translated by Burzuvia and Buzerjmihir the vizier of Chosroes and it is highly probable that the latter did assist, and thus learnt the secret, and this seems to form the most likely solution of the circumstance of his unraveling the mysteries of chess as alleged, without the slightest clue, to the amazement and delight of Chosroes and his court, when it was received as a test of wisdom and profound secret from the King of Hind. Writers who concur in or do not dissent from either of these accounts, yet differ as to which should take priority in point of date, the more reasonable supposition seems to be, that Burzuvia not unwilling to propitiate Chosroes' favourite vizier and Counsellor, reserved his knowledge from all but Buzerjmihir in which no doubt he exercised wise policy and did not himself go unrewarded. The chief Counsellor and vizier of a great King was a desirable person to conciliate in those days, and afterwards as is abundantly proved throughout Eastern history and dynasties from the time of Abu Bekr, Omar, Osman, Abdullah, and the Prophet, and later from Harun, and Al Mamun (786–833) even to the time of the enlightened Akbar, (1556–1605), continued examples are to be found in the reigns of the rulers through all these ages where the real sway vested in the vizier who frequently combined a great knowledge of learning with an extraordinary capacity for war.

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THE TEN ADVANTAGES OF CHESS ACCORDING TO THE PERSIAN PHILOSOPHER, ARE THUS GIVEN IN TRANSLATION.

The "first advantage" of which the commencement is wanting in the M.S., turns chiefly on the benefits of food and exercise for the mind in which chess is marked out as an active agent, intended by its inventor to conduce to intellectual energy in pursuit of knowledge, for as the human body is nourished by eating which is its food, and from which it obtains life and strength, and without which the body dies, so the mind of man is nourished by learning which is the food of the soul, and without which he would incur spiritual death; that is ignorance, and it is current that a wise man's sleep is better than a fool's devotion. The glory of man then is knowledge, and chess is the nourishment of the mind, the solace of the spirit, the polisher of intelligence, the bright sun of understanding, and has been preferred by the philosopher its inventor, to all other means by which we arrive at wisdom.

The Second Advantage is in Religion, illustrating the Muhammedan doctrines of predestination (Sabr and Cadar) by the free will of man in playing chess, moving when he will, or where he will, and which piece he thinks best, but restricted in some degree by compulsion, as he may not play against certain laws, nor give to one piece the move of another, whereas, on the contrary, Nerd (Eastern Backgammon) is mere free will, while in Dice again all is compulsion. This argument is pursued at some length in the text. Passing from this singular application of theology to chess play, we find the Third Advantage relates to Government, the principles of which the author declares to be best learned from chess. The board is compared to the world, and the adverse sets of men to two monarchs with their subjects, each possessing one half of the world, and with true eastern ambition desiring the other, but unable to accomplish his design without the utmost caution and policy. Perwiz and Ardeshir are quoted as having attributed all their wisdom of government to the study and knowledge of chess.

The Fourth Advantage relates to war, the resemblance to which of the mimic armies of chess, is too obvious to detain the philosopher long.

The Fifth Advantage of chess is in its resemblance to the Heavens. He says, the board represents the Heavens,

in which squares are the Celestial houses and the pieces Stars. The superior pieces are assimilated to the Moving Stars, and the Pawns which have only one movement to the Fixed Stars. The King is as the Sun, and the Wazir in place of the Moon, and the Elephants and Taliah in the place of Saturn; and the Rukhs and Dabbabah in that of Mars, and the Horses and Camel in that of Jupiter, and the Ferzin and Zarafah in that of Venus, and all these pieces have their accidents, corresponding with the Trines and Quadrates, and Conjunction and Opposition, and Ascendancy and Decline, such as the heavenly bodies have, and the Eclipse of the Sun is figured by Shah Caim or Stale Mate. This parallel is completed by indicating the functions of the different pieces in connection with the influence of their respective planets, and chess players are even invited to consult Astrology in adapting their moves to the various aspects.

The Sixth Advantage is derived from the preceding, and assigns to each piece, according to the planet it represents, certain physical temperaments, as the Warm, the Cold, the Wet, the Dry, answering to the four principal movements of chess, (viz, the Straight, Oblique, Mixed or Knights, and the Pawns move). This system is extended to the beneficial influence of chess on the body, prescribing it as a cure for various ailments of a lighter kind, as pains in the head and toothache, which are dissipated by the amusement of play; and no illness is more grievous than hunger and thirst, yet both these, when the mind is engaged in chess, are no longer thought of.

Advantage Seven, "In obtaining repose for the soul." The Philosopher says, the soul hath illnesses, like as the body hath, and the cure of these last is known, but of the soul's illness there be also many kinds, and of these I will mention a few. The first is Ignorance, and another is Disobedience, the third Haste, the Fourth Cunning, the fifth Avarice, sixth Tyranny, seventh Lying, the eighth Pride, the ninth Deceit, and Deceit is of two kinds, that which deceiveth others, and that by which we deceive ourselves; and the tenth is Envy, and of this also there be many kinds, and there is no one disorder of the soul greater than Ignorance for it is the soul's death, as learning is its life; and for this disease is chess an especial cure, since there is no way by which men arrive more speedily at knowledge and wisdom, and in like manner, by its practice all the faults which form the diseases of the soul, are converted into their corresponding virtues. Thus, Ignorance is exchanged for learning, obstinacy for docility, and precipitation for patience, rashness for prudence, lying for truth, cowardice for bravery, and avarice for generosity, tyranny for justice, irreligion for piety, deceitfulness for sincerity, hatred for affection, enmity for friendship.

The Eighth may be called a social advantage of chess, bringing men nearer to Kings and nobles, and as a cause of intimacy and friendship, and also as a preventive to disputes and idleness and vain pursuits.

The Tenth and last advantage is in combining war with sport, the utile with the dulce, in like manner as other philosophers have put moral in the mouths of beasts, and birds, and reptiles, and encouraged the love of virtue and inculcated its doctrines by allegorical writings such as the Marzaban, Namah, and Kalila wa Dimnah, under the attractive illusion of fable.

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### VIDA

There is scarcely any writer who has gone through so many editions and translations as Marcus Hieronymus Vida, Bishop of Alba. The Scacchia Ludus was published at Rome in 1527, and since then no fewer than twenty-four editions have been published in the original Latin, the last at London in 1813. Of translation there have been eleven in Italian, four in French, and eight in English, including the one ascribed to Goldsmith, which appears in an edition of that poet's works published by Murray in 1856. The only German translation hitherto noticed in this country is that printed at the end of Kochs Codex (1814) but we learn from an editorial note that the version now given in the Schachtzeitung is by Herr Pastor Jesse, and that it was published at Hanover in 1830. It was from Vida that Sir William Jones obtained the idea of his poem Caissa,



which Mr. Peter Pratt described in his *Studies of chess* as an "elegant embellishment" an "admired effusion" and a classical offering to chess. In the Introduction is found:

To THE READER, GREETING. Strange perchance may it seem to some (courteous Reader) that anie man should employ his time and bestow his labour in setting out such bookes, whereby men may learn to play, when indeede most men are given rather to play, than to studie and travell, which were true, if it were for the teaching of games unlawfull, as dice play, or cogging, or falsehoods in card play, or such like, but forasmuch as this game or kingly pastime is not only devoid of craft, fraud, and guile, swearing, staring, impatience, fretting and falling out, but also breedeth in the players a certaine studie, wit, pollicie, forecaste, and memorie not only in the play thereof, but also in action of publick government, both in peace and warre, wherein both Counsellors at home and Captaines abroade may picke out of these wodden pieces some prettie pollicie both how to govern their subjects in peace, how to leade or conduct lively men in the field in warre: for this game hath the similitude of a ranged battell, as by placing the men and setting them forth on the march may very easily appeare. The King standeth in the field in middle of his army, and hath his Queene next unto him and his Nobilitie about him, with his soldiers to defend him in the forefront of the battell.

Sith therefore this game is pleasant to all, profitable to most, hurtful to none. I pray thee (gentle reader) take this my labour in good part, and thou shalt animate me hereafter to the setting forth of deeper matters. Farewell. LUDUS SCACCHI.

Peter Pratt of Lincoln's Inn, author of the "Theory of Chess," (1799) a work referred to by Professor Allen, the biographer of Philidor as "the most divertingly absurd of all chess books." Some idea of the plan and style of the work may be obtained from the following extract from the author's preface: "The game of chess, though generally considered as an emblem of war (the blood stained specie of it) seemed to him (the author) more to resemble those less ensanguined political hostilities which take place between great men in free countries, an idea which was at once suggested and confirmed by observing that when one combatant is said to have conquered another, instead of doing anything like killing or wounding him, he only casts him from his place and gets into it himself." Fortified in this conceit the ingenious author converts the Pawns into Members of the House of Commons, the Rooks into Peers, while the Queen is transformed into a Minister, and the whole effect of this curious nomenclature upon the notation of the games is ludicrous in the extreme.

An American view was presented in the following words, it would probably have also have disturbed the equanimity of Forbes like that of Pope's did (page 20).

The date to which I have referred the origin of chess will probably astonish those persons who have only regarded it as the amusement of idle hours, and have never troubled themselves to peruse those able essays in which the best of antiquaries and investigators have dissipated the cloudy obscurity which once enshrouded this subject. Those who do not know the inherent life which it possesses will wonder at its long and enduring career. They will be startled to learn that chess was played before Columbus discovered America, before Charlemagne revived the Western Empire, before Romulus founded Rome, before Achilles went up to the Siege of Troy, and that it is still played as widely and as zealously as ever now that those events have been for ages a part of history. It will be difficult for them to comprehend how, amid the wreck of nations, the destruction of races, the revolutions of time, and the lapse of centuries, this mere game has survived, when so many things of far greater importance have either passed away from the memories of men, or still exist only in the dusty pages of the chroniclers. It owes, of course, much of its tenacity of existence to the amazing inexhaustibility of its nature. Some chess writers have loved to dwell upon the unending fertility of its powers of combinations. They have calculated by arithmetical rules the myriads of positions of which the pieces and pawns are susceptible. They have told us that a life time of many ages would hardly suffice even to count them. We know, too, that while the composers of the orient and the occident have displayed during long centuries an admirable subtilty and ingenuity in the fabrications of problems, yet the chess stratagems of the last quarter of a century have never been excelled in intricacy and beauty. We have witnessed, in our day

## Chess History and Reminiscences

contests brilliant with skilful maneuvers unknown to the sagacious and dexterous chess artists of the Eighteenth century.

Within the last thirty years we have seen the invention of an opening as correct in theory, and as elegant in practice as any upon the board, and of which our fathers were utterly ignorant. The world is not likely to tire of an amusement which never repeats itself, of a game which presents today, features as novel, and charms as fresh as those with which it delighted, in the morning of history, the dwellers on the banks of the Ganges and Indus.

An Indian philosopher thus described it:

It is a representative contest, a bloodless combat, an image, not only of actual military operations, but of that greater warfare which every son of the earth, from the cradle to the grave, is continually waging, the battle of life. Its virtues are as innumerable as the sands of African Sahara. It heals the mind in sickness, and exercises it in health. It is rest to the overworked intellect, and relaxation to the fatigued body. It lessens the grief of the mourner, and heightens the enjoyment of the happy. It teaches the angry man to restrain his passions, the light-minded to become grave, the cautious to be bold, and the venturesome to be prudent. It affords a keen delight to youth, a sober pleasure to manhood, and a perpetual solace to old age. It induces the poor to forget their poverty, and the rich to be careless of their wealth. It admonishes Kings to love and respect their people, and instructs subjects to obey and reverence their rulers. It shows how the humblest citizens, by the practise of virtue and the efforts of labour, may rise to the loftiest stations, and how the haughtiest lords, by the love of vice and the commission of errors, may fall from their elevated estate. It is an amusement and an art, a sport and a science. The erudite and untaught, the high and the low, the powerful and the weak, acknowledge its charms and confirm its enticements. We learn to like it in the years of our youth, but as increased familiarity has developed its beauties, and unfolded its lessons, our enthusiasm has grown stronger, and our fondness more confirmed.

NOTE. The earliest example of praise and censure of chess strikes us as very curious and sufficiently interesting to be presented as illustrating two varieties of Arabian style, and as exhibiting two sides of the question. It is from one of the early Arabian manuscripts called the Yawakit ul Mawakit in the collection Baron Hammer Purgstall at Vienna.

By Ibn Ul Mutazz.  
CENSURE OF CHESS.

The chess player is ever absorbed in his chess and full of care, swearing false oaths and making many vain excuses, one who careth only for himself and angereth his Maker. 'Tis the game of him who keepeth the fast only when he is hungry, of the official who is in disgrace, of the drunkard till he recovereth from his drunkenness, and in the Yatimat ul Dehr it is said, Abul Casim al Kesrawi hated chess, and constantly abused it, saying, you never see a chess player rich who is not a sordid miser, nor hear a squabbling that is not on a question of the chess board.

IN PRAISE OF CHESS

O thou whose cynic sneers express the censure of our favourite chess,  
Know that its skill is science self, its play distraction from  
distress,  
It soothes the anxious lover's care, it weans the drunkard from excess,  
It counsels warriors in their art, when dangers threat and perils press,  
And yields us when we need them most, companions in our loneliness.

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## Chess History and Reminiscences

The manuscript of the Asiatic Society presented to them by Major Price, is a curious but interesting production, the author is unknown, but he is regarded as a very quaint individual, an opinion perhaps not unwarranted by his preface, and many a one (he says) has experienced a relief from sorrow, and affliction in consequence of this magic recreation, and this same fact has been asserted by the celebrated physician, Mohammed Zakaria Razi, in his book, entitled "The Essence of Things," "and such is likewise the opinion of the physician Abi Bin Firdaus as I shall notice more fully towards the end of the present work for the composing of which I am in the hope of receiving my reward from God, who is most high and most glorious.

"I have passed my life since the age of fifteen among all the masters of chess living in my time, and since that period till now, when I have arrived at middle age, I have travelled through Irak Arab, and Irak Ajarm, and Khurasam and the regions of Mawara al Nahr (Transoxania), and I have there met with many a master of this art, and I have played with all of them, and through the favour of Him who is adorable and Most High, I have come off victorious. Likewise in playing without seeing the board I have overcome most opponents, nor had they the power to cope with me. I, the humble sinner now addressing you have played with one opponent over the board and at the same time I have carried on four different games with as many adversaries without seeing the board, whilst I conversed freely with my friends all along and through the Divine favour I conquered them all."

The ten advantages of chess as set forth by the anonymous author of the Asiatic Society's M.S. form the most remarkable specimens of chess criticism. The first discusses it as food and exercise for the mind, the second, he says is in Religion and free will, 3 relates to Government, 4 to war, 5 to the Heavens and stars, 6 to the Temperaments, 7 in obtaining repose, 8 The social advantage of chess, 9 Wisdom and knowledge, 10, In combining war with sport.

Advantage the ninth is in wisdom and knowledge, and that wise men do play chess, and to those who object that foolish men also play chess, and though constantly engaged in it, become no wiser, it may be answered, that the distinction between wise and foolish men in playing chess, is as that of man and beast in eating of the tree, that the man chooses its ripe and sweet fruit, while the beast eats but the leaves and branches, and the unripe and bitter fruit, and so it is with players of chess. The wise man plays for those virtues and advantages which have been already mentioned, and the foolish man plays it for mere sport and gambling, and regards not its advantages and virtues. Thus may be seen, one man who breaks the stone of the fruit and eats the kernel, while another will even skin it to obtain the innermost part, and in pursuit of knowledge men do likewise. One man is content with the exterior and apparent meaning of the words, nor seeks its hidden sense, and this is the man who eats the fruit and throws away the kernel. Another desires to be acquainted with the secret and inmost meaning that he may enjoy the whole benefit of it, and he is like unto the man who takes out the very oil of the nut, and mixes it with sugar and makes therewith a precious sweetmeat, which he eats and throws away the rest. This is the condition of the wise man, and the foolish man in playing chess.

The game of chess received by the Arabians from the Persians was differently regarded by the various sects, some practising, others disapproving it. Familiar references occur to it in the time of the Prophet, who died 632 A.D. Commentators considered that a passage in the Koran concerning lots and images embraced chess within the meaning of the latter term. The words are "O true believers, surely wine, and lots, and images, and divining arrows are an abomination of the works of Satan, therefore avoid ye them that ye may prosper."

Mussulman commentators supposed that the interdiction applied not to the game itself in which chance had no part, but to the carved figures, representing the pieces, Men, Horses, Elephants,

According to Sokeiker of Damascus, the author of the book Mustatraph and others, it is related from the Sunna. That about the time of Mahomet they played in the East at chess with figured men. As Ali accidentally passed by some men playing at chess he said to them, "What are these small images upon which ye are so intent." From which it appears says the historian, the Prophet saw small images of which he knew

not the use. The Mahometans of the Persian sect, it is said, used figures, and the Turks and Arabians plain pieces.

The Arabians had among them very expert chess players.

The progress of chess from Persia to Arabia plainly appears from the number of Persian words which are never used by the Arabians except in this game. The Elephants which held a place in it, and the Chariot, Ship, or Boat, original terms for the Bishop of our game are among the proofs adduced of its Indian origin which neither European nor Asiatic writers seem to doubt, whilst with chess players the agreement in principle and identity of pieces in the present game with the ancient Chaturanga is deemed almost conclusive.

Al Suli, who died in 946 is recorded to have been the greatest player among the Arabians. Adali al Rumi was also a player of the very highest class, both of these as well as Abul Abbas a physician, who died in 899, and Lajlaj in the same age wrote treatises on the game. Ibn Dandun and Al Kunaf, both of Bagdad were of the first class, called Aliyat.

NOTE. Khusra Naushirawan, King of Persia, who reigned 528 to 576 (Anna Comnena, Lambe) or 531 to 579 (Forbes and biographers) seems to be the first Royal patron of chess and if we consider the accounts of Alexander the Great, and his contemporary Indian Kings insufficiently vouched Shahnama, (Asiatic Society's M.S.), ranks as our earliest reigning great patron, (Justinian perhaps coming next). Al Walid, conqueror of Spain, 705 to 715 A.D. is the first mentioned among Arabian rulers before the famous Harun Ar Rashid. The enlightened, mild and humane Al Mamun (second son of Harun) the great patron of science, comes seventh on the list, and is supposed to have been the most enthusiastic and liberal of all the Khalifs, and we are told that it was a happy thing for any worthy man of learning or scholar to become known to him. "Unluckily it is said for Oriental literature, but few of the Arabian treasures have been preserved, and of those that have, scarcely any are translated," but there are abundant references to shew that some of the most powerful Eastern rulers were chess players, (Gibbon and others and Eastern historians) and probably as has been suggested, (Lambe, Bland, Forbes, many of them were devoted to or partial to the game, list of the Khalifs, Sultans, Emperors and Kings of the East, Africa, Spain and at times of Egypt and Persia, from Abu Bekr 632 to 1212 A.D. (the great battle) which finally overthrew the Moorish ascendancy.

The versions of Persian Chess. Burzuvia 1, King of Hind 2.

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Abu Feda, who is regarded as one of the most reliable historians in the annals of the Muslims, records the following letter from Nicephorus, Emperor of the Romans to Harun, "Sovereign of the Arabs," the date given being about 802 A.D.

After the usual compliments the epistle proceeds:

"The Empress (Irene) into whose place I have succeeded looked upon you as a Rukh, and herself as a mere Pawn, therefore she submitted to pay you a tribute more than the double of which she ought to have exacted from you. All this has been owing to female weakness and timidity. Now, however, I insist that you immediately on reading this letter repay to me all the sums of money you ever received from her. If you hesitate, the sword shall settle our accounts."

In reply to this pithy epistle, Harun in great wrath wrote on the back of the leaf:

"In the name of God the Merciful and Gracious.' From Harun the Commander of the Faithful to the Roman dog, Nicephorus.

"I have read thine epistle, thou son of an infidel mother. My answer to it thou shalt see not here. Nicephorus had to sue for peace, and to pay the tribute as before."

The above is adduced as tending to confirm by the familiar allusion to Rukh and Pawn that the game was known to the Greeks and Arabians in the eighth century.

NOTE. The unknown Persian philosopher in his M.S. presented by Major Price, the eminent Orientalist to the Asiatic Society attributes the invention of chess to Hermes, who lived in the time of Moses. This M.S. which is the one upon which Bland mainly bases his admirable treatise on Persian Chess is imperfect, many pages being missing, including that in which the title, name of author and date would doubtless appear if the M. S. was perfect, what exists however is singularly curious and interesting. It commences with a description of the author himself, and his prowess and achievements. It then sets forth under ten headings the advantages of chess, explains its terms, and describes it fully, gives the names of great players with many positions, including some of Al Mutasem, eighth Khalif of Abbaside, (833 to 842) and 18 by Ali Shaturanji the Philidor of Timur's time. Bland assigns about the Tenth century, between the time of the death of Al Razi the physician of Bagdad, and that of the poet Firdausi, as the age of the document. Forbes strongly contends that it was more probably written in the time of Tamerlane, between 1380 and 1400 A.D. and hints that it may have been prepared to please that monarch himself with an illustration of the great game called the Complete or Perfect Chess of Timur (with 56 pieces and 112 squares) to which he had become much attached. Blindfold play by the author and others is described in the M.S. as well as the giving of odds, there being no less than thirteen grades of players enumerated.

Anna Comnena was born 1083 and died 1148, she was the daughter of the Emperor "Alexis Comnenus" and "The Empress Irene." During the latter years of her life she composed a work to which she gave the name of Alexius, which is divided into 15 books, and has been more or less esteemed by critics, generally, and is called a memorable work by all.

The Biographical Dictionary 1842 describes it as one of the most important and interesting works of the time, and the chief source for the life of Alexius I, mention is made of her great beauty and extraordinary talents, also of her learning, and that her palace was the rendezvous of the most eminent Greek scholars, poets, artists, and statesmen, and was surrounded by many of the distinguished barons of the first Crusaders, on their appearance at Constantinople; reference is made to her attachment to arts and sciences, but as to chess or music, or the diversions, or recreations, common to the period, or favoured at the Court not one word is said, and this seems very remarkable, as due prominence is given to her notice of chess by chess writers. The article is initialed W. P. William Plate, L.L.D., M.R., Geographical Society of Paris. This gentleman may have been unacquainted with chess, and so may Don Pascual de Gayangos and Dr. Sprenger, the other writers in the Biography, but it happens that many of the articles in the same volume are by Duncan Forbes, who in other works so prominently makes due mention of Anna Comnena and her references to chess, and the fact that her father Alexius was in the habit of playing the game.

We are told by Hyde that the Princess Anna Comnena relates, in the Alexius a work written by her in the beginning of the 12th century, "that the Emperor (Alexius), her father, in order to dispel the cares arising from affairs of state, occasionally played chess at night with some of his relations or kinsfolk. She then says that this game had been originally brought into use among the Byzantines from the Assyrians." The fair historian says nothing as to the time when the game came from Assyria, which may have been five centuries before she wrote, her statement, however, proves that it came from Persia, and not from Arabia, for Assyria formed an important portion of the Persian Empire under the Sassassian dynasty, and in fact was for some centuries a kind of debatable land, and alternately occupied by the Persians and Romans, according as victory swayed to one side or the other. The term Assyria, then, denoting Persia in general, is used here in a well known figurative sense "per synecdechen," a part taken for the whole, just as the term Fers is employed to at this day to denote the whole of Persia, whereas it is only the name of a single insignificant province of that

kingdom. Finally, the once splendid empire of Assyria, of Media, and of Persia, had all passed away long before Anna Comnena wrote, so that one name is just as likely to be employed by her as another. (Forbes.)

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The European origin of chess, or rather the supposed time of its first introduction through the Arabs into Spain 713, 715, though resting on a general consensus of agreement may yet prove to be ill matured, for though it is clear that Spain did get knowledge of it at the conquest and occupancy during Al Walid's reign by the armies under Musa Ibn Nosseyr and Tarik Ibn Yeyzad it is not so certain, if the Romans were acquainted with it at the time of the edict, 830 years earlier, that it may not have been known in some parts of Europe before the time supposed, besides which we have the Asiatic Society's statement, through its Persian M.S., and from the Shahnama applicable to Alexander the Great's time, and the Indian Kings in treaty with him.

The commonly accepted theory, that England first got chess through William of Normandy at the Conquest or on the return of the first Crusaders (in the latter case about 1100 A.D.), though concurred in with tolerable unanimity by all writers until Sir Frederic Madden raised his doubts in 1828 also appears scarcely consistent with previous incidents found on record. Canute's partiality for chess (he reigned 1017 to 1035) events mentioned in the reigns of Athelstan and Edgar and the chess pieces and boards we read of including those dug up at the Isle of Lewis, and of Pepin, Charlemagne, Harfagia, King of Norway, and in Iceland seem to be unnoticed or too slightly regarded by those who wrote on assumed Saxon or English chess, first knowledge. The period assigned for chess in England is 500 years later than its arrival in Persia, and subsequent receipt in Arabia, and probably in Greece, and nearly 400 years after its practice among the Spaniards, the Aquitaines and the Franks. The Saxon monarchs who first became most given to the search after knowledge of all kinds and who were acquainted with and contemporary with Pepin and Charlemagne and Harun and the great Al Mamun may well have heard of and acquired some knowledge of a game so popular as chess had become at the Carolingian and Greek Courts, and in the Eastern dominions and Mohammedan Spain.

The reigns of Offa and Egbert seem not improbable ones in which chess might have become known among us, the scholar Alcuin from his long sojourn and domestication with Charlemagne and his family, by all of whom he was revered and beloved, was familiar with that monarch's tastes and amusements. He was in fact his preceptor in the sciences. By arrangement with Charlemagne he paid a visit to his native country, England, during the years 790 to 793 A.D., he probably knew chess and was familiar with the celebrated chess men which the Emperor valued so much, and have been reported on in our own times, and he seems the least unlikely person to have noticed and assisted in encouraging a judicious practice of it in England. Offa also corresponded with Charlemagne. Egbert took refuge at his Court before he began to reign and was well received, and for a time served in the Emperor's army, and that those kings may have known of the royal game, through Alcuin, or even direct is not impossible or even improbable.

H. T. Buckle, the author and historian, (born 1822, died at Damascus in 1862) foremost in skill among chess amateurs, satisfied with the evidence of Canute's partiality for the game thought it very probable that it might have been known before the commencement of that monarch's reign (1016), and suggested perhaps a century earlier. Sir Frederick Madden (1828 to 1832) at the outset of some highly interesting communications to the "Asiatic Researches," at first inclined to the Crusaders' theory, but upon later consideration in his articles he arrived at the conclusion that chess must have been known among us as early as the reign of Athelstan (925 to 940), and Professor Duncan Forbes (1854 to 1860) concurred in that view, both writers regard the incident related of the Earl of Devonshire and his beautiful daughter being found playing chess together, when Earl Athelwold, King Edgar's messenger arrived to test the report of her great beauty as not unworthy of credit. Edgar reigned from 958 to 975. English history referring to this incident among the amours of Edgar makes no mention of the Earl of Devonshire and his daughter being found playing chess together. Hume says Elfrida was daughter and heir of Olgar (Orgar), Earl of Devonshire, and though she had been educated in the country and had never appeared in Court she had filled all England with the reputation of her beauty. The mission of

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Earl Athelwold, his deception of the King and his own marriage with Elfrida follows, next the King's discovery, the murder of Athelwold by the King, and his espousal of Elfrida.

This incident in Edgar's reign with some in Athelstan's, including the present to Harold Harfagra, King of Norway, of a very fine and rich chess table, and the account and description of seventy chessmen of different sizes, belonging to various sets, dug up in the parish of Uig, Isle of Lewis, are mentioned among the matters which cause the impression and assumption that a knowledge of chess had existed in the north of Europe, and in England earlier than the Conquest days assigned to it by all writers before Madden's views of 1832 appeared.

So early as the Eighth century some courtesies began to be extended and enquiries made between contemporary monarchs on theological, scientific, and social matters. The presents received by the Carolingian rulers from Constantinople and the East included the chess equipages deposited and preserved as sacred relics in France, which had belonged to Pepin and to Charlemagne. The latter was contemporary with the famous Harun Ar Rashid of Bagdad and Princess Irene and her successor Emperor Nicephorus of Constantinople. Greetings and embassies passed between them.

Offa corresponded with Charlemagne and despatched the scholar Alcuin to assist him in refuting certain religious heresies (as alleged) propounded by one Felix, a bishop of Urgel. Egbert, we read, took refuge at Charlemagne's Court, was well received by him and served for a time in his army. Alcuin was the preceptor and became the life-long friend and adviser of Charlemagne, was domesticated with him and greatly revered in his family. 232 letters of Alcuin's are referred to in Forbes' edition.

The Emperor's taste for chess, his celebrated chessmen and his communications on scientific and social matters with the East and elsewhere could be no secrets to Alcuin.

Charlemagne seems to have fancied himself at chess, and from his avidity to find an opponent Alcuin may have been induced to test conclusions of chess skill with him. On his visit to England in 793 Alcuin brought his knowledge with him and he is the least unlikely person to have noticed chess and to have assisted in diffusing a knowledge of it in England.

Egbert, a young man of the most promising hopes gave great jealousy to Brithric, the reigning prince, both because he seemed by his birth better entitled to the crown, and because he had acquired, to an eminent degree the affections of the people. Egbert, sensible of his danger from the suspicions of Brithric, secretly withdrew into France where he was well received by Charlemagne. By living in the Court, and serving in the armies of that prince, the most able and most generous that had appeared in Europe during several ages, he acquired those accomplishments which afterwards enabled him to make such a shining figure on the throne, and familiarizing himself to the manners of the French, who, as Malmesbury observes, were eminent, both for valour and civility above all the Western Nations, he learned to polish the rudeness and barbarity of the Saxon character, his early misfortunes thus proved a singular advantage to him.

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### THEORIES AS TO THE INVENTION OF CHESS

In the second volume of the "History of British India," by James Mill, Esq., we are told that the Araucanians invented the game of chess.

Forbes sums up an article upon this claim by saying, "We must in charity suppose that Mr. Mill really knew nothing of chess, whether Hindu, Persian, or Chinese."

### AS TO THE SUPPOSED ORIGIN OF CHESS

Professor Wilson's opinion of Mr. Mill's work is better worth recording. "History of British India," by James Mill, Esq., fourth edition, with notes and continuation, by Horace Hayman Wilson, M.A., F.R.S., London 1840, 9 vols., 8 vo., Vide Preface by Professor Wilson, page vii,

Of the proofs which may be discovered in Mr. Mill's history of the operation of preconceived opinions, in confining a vigorous and active understanding to a partial and one-sided view of a great question, no instance is more remarkable than the unrelenting pertinacity with which he labours to establish the barbarism of the Hindus. Indignant at the exalted, and it may be granted, sometimes exaggerated descriptions of their advance in civilization, of their learning, their sciences, their talents, their virtues which emanated from the amiable enthusiasm of Sir William Jones, Mr. Mill has entered the lists against him with equal enthusiasm, but a less commendable purpose, and has sought to reduce them as far below their proper level as their encomiasts may have formerly elevated them above it. With very imperfect knowledge, with materials exceedingly defective, with an implicit faith in all testimony hostile to Hindu pretensions, he has elaborated a portrait of the Hindus which has no resemblance whatever to the original, and which almost outrages humanity. As he represents them, the Hindus are not only on a par with the least civilized nations of the old and new world, but they are plunged almost without exception in the lowest depths of immorality and crime. Considered merely in a literary capacity, the description of the Hindus, in the history of British India is open to censure for its obvious unfairness and injustice, but in the effect which it is likely to exercise upon the connexion between the people of England and the people of India, it is chargeable with more than literary element, its tendency is evil, it is calculated to destroy all sympathy between the rulers and the ruled.

A writer in Fraser's Magazine, observes: "The native of India is defective in that mental and moral energy, that restless enterprise, which distinguishes the Anglo Saxon genius, and which gives him such a preponderance over the impassive and contemplative Oriental, but, on the other hand, the native of India possesses in a high degree that acute perception and common sense strengthened by numerical traditions and maxims, which enable him to judge correctly of both the acts and motives of his Foreign superior. It should be recollected to their credit, that the germ of almost every known invention, the original idea of nearly every useful secret in arts, the knowledge of the highest branches of the abstract sciences, had been familiar to the wise men of the East, and were taught in the most perfect language in the world, the mother of all other languages, the Sanskrit.

The anonymous or rather unknown author of the Asiatic Society's M.S. often declares that the Hindus were far too stupid a people to have invented chess.

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### SALVIO, DOCTOR OF CIVIL LAWS

The inventor as some authors declare, and among them Jacobus de Cessolus, a Friar and Master of the Dominican Order, is Xerxes, a philosopher and minister of Ammolius, King of Babylon whose object was to admonish his monarch of the errors that had been committed in the government of the realm. This opinion is followed by many, of whom the author of the *Historia del Mondo* is one. St. Gregory of Nazianzen in his third oration, Cassiodorus the Great in his thirty-first epistle and eighth book, Allesandri Allesandro in the third book and twenty first chapter of his *Dies Geniales*, Torquato Tasso in his *Romeo del Gioco*, Thomas Actius in his *Tractatus de Ludo Scaccherum*, and other legal authors who have treated of play, say that chess owes its origin to Palamedes who at the siege of Troy, employed it in order that his soldiers should not remain inactive, and not being able to practice actual warfare, they might amuse themselves with mimic conflicts. For which reason Palamedes played it with Thersites, as Homer tells us in the second book of the *Iliad*, so also did the other heroes of the Grecian armies, as is related by Euripides in his tragedies.

Carrera 1617, published a large volume concerning the origin of chess, in which he attempts to prove from



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Herodotus, Euripides, Sophocles, Philostratus, Homer, Virgil, Aristotle, Seneca, Plato, Ovid, Horace, Quintilian, and Martial Vida, that Palamedes invented chess at the siege of Troy.

The Encyclopaedia or Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences, dedicated to the King in 1727, contains an account of chess, but it is neither a well informed nor useful article beyond the statement that Schach is originally Persian, and that Schachmat in that language, signifies the king is dead, it vouchsafes neither reasonable nor useful information.

The traditionary names mentioned in the article are Schatrinscha a Persian philosopher, Palamedes, Diogenes and Pyrrhus, its authorities, Nicod, Bochart, Scriverius, Fabricius, and Donates, and it concludes with a sample of the stereotyped character, with which we are so familiar of the trace of chess origin, being lost in the remote ages of antiquity. Chess is thus described in it:

"An ingenious game, played or performed with little round pieces of wood, on a board divided into 64 squares, where art and address are so indispensably requisite, that chance seems to have no place, and a person never loses but by his own fault. On each side are eight noblemen and as many pawns, which are to be moved and shifted, according to certain rules and laws of the game."

The same work specifies the various ancient opinions upon the origin of the game, inclining to those of Nicod and Bochart, supported by Scriverius, who state that Schach is originally Persian, and Schachmat in that language signifies the king dead.

Another opinion is that of all the theories enunciated, the most probable is that of Fabricius, who avers that a celebrated Persian astronomer, one Schatrinscha, invented the game, and gave it his own name, which it still bears in that country. It adds, Donatus observes, that Pyrrhus the most knowing and expert prince of his age, ranging a battle, made use of the men at chess, to form his designs, and to shew the secrets thereof to other. The common opinion was that it was invented by Palamedes at the siege of Troy, others attributed it to Diomedes, who lived in the time of Alexander, but the text concludes by remarking, "The truth appears to be that the game is so very ancient, there is no tracing its author."

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### CHAUCER

In the Fourteenth and Fifteenth centuries, chess continued to be extremely popular, Chaucer in one of his minor poems "The Boke of the Duchesse," introduces himself in a dream as playing at chess with Fortune, and speaks of false moves, as though dishonest tricks were sometimes practised in the game. He tells us:

At chesse with me she gan to playe,  
With her fals draughts (moves) dyvers,  
She staale on me and toke my fers (Queen),  
And wharne I sawe my fers awaye,  
Allas I couthe no longer playe,  
But seyde, farewell swete yuys,  
And farewell ul that ever ther ys,  
Therwith fortune seyde Chek here,  
And mayte in the myd poynt of the Chek here, (chess board)  
With a paune (pawn) errante allas,  
Ful craftier to playe she was,  
Than Athalus that made the game,  
First of the chesse, so was hys name.

(ROBERT BELL)-CHAUCER, Vol. VI. p. 157.

SAUL AND BARBIERE

Barbieri 1640, in his work, "The famous game of chess play," dedicated to Lucy, Countess of Bedford, observes:

"For the antiquity of this game, I find upon record, that it was invented 614 years before the Nativity of Christ, so that it is now 2,252 years since it hath been practiced, and it is thought that Xerxes (a puissant King) was the deviser thereof, though some be of opinion that it was made by excellent learned men, as well appeareth by the wonderful invention of the same."

The title is quaintly expressed.

The famous game of chesse play, "Being a princely exercise wherein the learner may profit more by reading of this small book, than by playing of a thousand mates. Now augmented by many material things formerly wanting and beautified by a threefold methode of the Chesse men, of the Chesse play, of the Chesse moves."

by J. BARBIERE, P.

To which is added representation of a chesse board and pieces, with two players thereat, in the act of drawing for the move with the following lines:

"If on your man you light,  
The first draught you may play,  
If not tis mine by right,  
At first to leade the way.

Printed in London, for John Jackson, dwelling without Temple Barre, 1460.

The introduction is in the following words:

To  
The Right  
Honourable, Thrice Noble, and Vertuous Lady,  
Lucy Countesse of Bedford, one of the Ladies of Her  
Majesties Privie Chamber.

This little book, not so much for the subject sake (though much esteemed), as for bearing in front your Honour's honoured name having found that good acceptance with the world, as now to come to be re-imprinted. I have been desired by the printer, my friend, little to review it, and finding it indeed a prettie thing, but with some wants specially or a good methode, I have to my best skill rectified it for him, leaving to the author (now deceased), with the good respect and commendation due to him for his honest and generous endeavour, his phrase and stile whole as farre as I might of this Madame, I now presume to offer your Honour the censure whose singular judgment, and love in and unto this noble exercise, is reported to be a chief grace to the same, that so both his labour and mine herein, may returne to the sacred Shrine of your Honour's vertues, there still to receive protection against ignorance and malice.

For which attempt of mine, humbly craving pardon I rest,  
Noble Madame of Your Honour,  
The most submissive observant, J. BARBIERE, P.

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JOHN LYDGATE

## Chess History and Reminiscences

The earliest English references to chess, are in the works of Chaucer, Gower, Occreve, Price, Denham, Sir Philip Sydney, Sir Walter Raleigh,

John Lydgate the English Monk of St. Edmund's-Bury, calls this game, the Game Royal, and he dedicates his book, written in the manner of a love poem, to the admirers of chess, which he compares to a love battle, in the following words: M.S.

JOHN LYDGATE.

To all Folky's vertuose,  
That gentil bene and amerouse,  
Which love the fair play notable,  
Of the Chesse most delytable,  
Whith all her hoole full entente,  
Where they shall fynde, and son anoone,  
How that I not yere agoone,  
Was of a Fers so Fortunate,  
Into a corner drive and maat.

The old English names in Lydgate, are 1, Kynge, 2, Queen or Fers, 3, Awfn, or Alfin, 4, Knyght, or Horseman, 5, Roke or Rochus, 6, Paune.

Although Shakespeare makes no mention of chess in his works, some of his brother dramatists, and other writers who were contemporary with him, were fond of referring to it. Skelton, poet laureate to Henry the Eighth, says:

For ye play so at the chesse,  
As they suppose and guess,  
That some of you but late,  
Hath played so checkmate,  
With Lords of High estate,  
And again,  
Our dayes be datyed,  
To be check matyed.

Many other poets and writers of that age, drew similes and figures of speech from the chess board, including Spencer, Cowley, Denham, Beaumont and Fletcher, quaint Arthur Saul and John Dryden.

Middleton's Comedy of Chesse, 1624, was acted at the Globe. It was however a sort of religious controversy, the game being played by a member of the Church of England, and another of the Church of Rome, the former in the end gaining the victory. The play being considered too political, the author was cast into prison, from which he obtained his release by the following petition to the King.

A harmless game, coyned only for delight,  
T'was played betwixt the black house and the white,  
The white house won, yet still the black doth brag,  
They had the power to put me in the bag,  
Use but your hand, tw'll set me free,  
T'is but removing of a man, that's me.

Philidor states in his work that historians have commemorated the following Sovereigns as chess players: Charlemagne, Tamerlane, Sebastian, King of Portugal, Philip II King of Spain, The Emperor Charles V, Catherine of Medecis, Queen of France, Pope Leo X, Henry IV of France, Queen Elizabeth, Louis XIII, James I of England (who used to call the game a philosophical folly,) Louis XIV, William III, Charles XII, and Frederick of Russia.

## Chess History and Reminiscences

Of these, Charlemagne, who reigned 768 to 814 is the earliest name. Tamerlane or Timur who dominated at the end of the 14th century is the next. The remainder date from the 16th century.

To this list the renowned and esteemed Philidor might have made some very material additions. If the first Indian account of Kings, Kaid and Porus, in Alexander the Great's time, is to be relied on, the Macedonian conqueror who was in friendly alliance with Porus in 326 B.C., might have become acquainted with chess, and Aristotle, some time his tutor, may have played it as supposed in one of the Arabian manuscripts. Chosroes, King of Persia, who reigned from 531 to 579, Harun Ar Rashid, 786 to 809, Al Amin, his first son, 809 to 813, the magnificent Al Mamun, his second son, 813 to 833, Al Mutasem, the most skilful player among the rulers, 833 to 842, and Al Wathick, 842 to 847, the five successive Caliphs of the powerful Abbasside dynasty, during the palmy period called the Golden Age of Arabian Literature, are identified with a very interesting period of chess practice and progress, and are all recorded to have been chess players. Al Walid the Sixth, of Umeyyah, 705 to 715, who through his generals, Tarik Ibn Zeyyad and Musa Ibn Nosseyr and their armies invaded, conquered and occupied Spain, is the earliest ruler we read of as a chess player after its first great friend and patron Chosroes, but it is pretty certain that Justinian, who died in 565, and was contemporary with Chosroes, was also an exponent and supporter of the game.

Of the one hundred and sixty monarchs who ruled the East Africa and Spain from the days of Bekr, Omar, and the Prophet to the downfall of Moorish ascendancy in the middle of the Thirteenth century, we read of several who emulated the tastes of their most famous predecessors, and the Rahmans, Mansur and An Nassirs vied with Harun and Al Mamun in their patronage and encouragement of all sorts of learning arts and sciences. Of the powerful Abbasside dynasty which lasted from 749 to 1258, there were 37 Caliphs whose chess doings and sayings alone would, it is said fill a good-sized volume.

NOTE. In addition to the 37 of Abbas and 14 of Umeyyah 664 to 749, there were 17 of Beni Umeyyah 755 to 1030, there were 14 Fatimites, 893 to 1169, 5 Almmoravides (exclusive of Abdullah, the founder), the Mahdi, 1059 to 1145, 13 Almohades, 1130 to 1269, and 8 Sultans of Almowat, 1095 to 1256. These with about 52 other rulers, Sultans, Emperors or Kings of Cordova, Toledo, Seville, Khorassan, Valentia and Badajoz, make up a list of about 160 rulers, who swayed the East Africa and Mohammedan Spain for about 650 years. The Moors after suffering great defeats in 1085 and 1139 received a final check in the great battle of 1212, and in 1248 when Ferdinand III of Castile took Seville their powers of aggression had vanished.

NOTE. Abbasides is the name generally given to the Beni Abbas or descendants of Abbas, who succeeded the Beni Umeyyah in the Empire of the East. Owing to their descent from the uncle of the Prophet, they had ever since the introduction of Islam been held in great esteem by the Arabs, and had frequently aspired to the Khalifate. In the year 132, A.D. 749–750, Abul-abbas Abdullah, son of Mohammed, son of Ali, son of Abdullah, son of Abbas Ibn Aldi-l-Mutalib, uncle of the Prophet Mohammed, revolted at Kujah, and after putting to death Merwan II, the last Khalif of the house of Umeyyah, was unanimously raised to the throne. Thirty-seven Khalifs of the dynasty of Abbas reigned for a period of 523 lunar or Mohammedan years over the East (Spain, Africa and Egypt) having been successively detached from their Empire, until the last of them, Al Mut'assem, was deprived both of his kingdom and his life by the Tartars under Hulaku Khan, 1258.

NOTE. The Khalif Al Mamun was one day playing with one of his courtiers, who moved negligently and in a careless manner, the Khalif perceived it and got wrath, and turned over the board and men, and said: "He wants to deceive me and practice on my understanding; and he vowed on earth that this person should never play with him again." In like manner, it is related of Walid ben Abdul Malik ben Merwan, that on an occasion when one of his courtiers, who used to play with him negligently at chess, omitted to follow the proper rules of the game, the Khalif struck him a blow with the Ferzin (or Queen) which broke his head, saying: "Woe unto thee! Art thou playing chess, and art thou in thy senses."

NOTE. The 37th and last Khalif of Abbasside, was dethroned and put to death by Hulaku. the son of Genghis

Khan in 1258, when the Tartars were also sorely troubling part of the Christian world, and frightening the Popes. Unluckily for Oriental Literature we are told, scarcely any of the comparatively few works of the "Golden Age of Arabian Literature" saved from destruction, have been translated or made known to us, but we may conclude that of the one hundred and sixty rulers, not a few emulating Harun, Mamun, Walid and Mutasem, were more or less like them, devoted to the game. The powerful Abbaside Dynasty lasted from 749 to 1258, and there were 37 Khalifs of that race, the chess sayings and doings of whom alone, it is said, would fill a good-size volume, chess has had to contend against the consideration that the greatest historians and biographers, with the exception of Cunningham and Forbes, and perhaps Gibbon were not players, hence what we do possess is gathered from scattered allusion, incidental and accidental rather than sustained or connected narrative or biographical notice. Canute the Dane, 1016–1035, William the First, and other English Kings, not so well attested, are absent from Philidor's list. Henry I, John, two of the Edwards, I and IV, and Charles I are identified with the chess incidents. Accounts of Henry VII and Henry VIII, contain items of expense connected with the game. The bluff king it is said played chess, as Wolsey and Cranmer did, and as Pitt, and Wilberforce, and Sunderland, Bolingbroke and Sydney Smyth have in our generations. The vain and tyrant king, like the Ras of Abyssinia, who we hear of through Salt and Buckle much preferred winning, and was probably readily accommodated. Less magnanimous and wise, these two, Henry and Ras, did not in this respect resemble Al Mamun and Tamerlane, whom Ibn Arabshah, Gibbon and others tell us, had no dislike to being beaten, but rather honored their opponents. The chessmen of Henry VIII were last heard of in the possession of Sir Thomas Herbert, those of Charles I were with Lord Barrington. Chess men were kept for Queen Elizabeth's use by Lord Cecil, the Earl of Leicester, and Sir John Harrington.

In olden times as supposed, Alexander the Great, perhaps from acquaintance with India and its Kings, and their powerful Porus, 326 B.C., may have known chess and possibly Aristotle, sometime his tutor, who some say, invented chess, also played it. The most ancient names are the renowned Prince Yudhistheira, eldest son of King Pandu of the Sanskrit chess period, the yet earlier Prince Nala of the translated poems, and further back we have the Brahmin Radha Kants account from the old Hindu law book, that the wife of Ravan, King of Lanka, Ceylon, invented chess in the second age of the world. Associated with games not chess, but more like Draughts in China, there are Emperor Yao, 2300 B.C., Wa Wung 1122 B.C., Confucius 551 B.C., Hung Cochu, 172 B.C, and in Egypt, Queen Hatasu about 1750 B.C., Amenoph II, 1687 to 1657 B.C., and Rameses IV 1559 to 1493 B.C.

NOTE. The Throne, Cartouche, Signet, and other relics. The Draught Box and Draughtsmen of Queen Hatasu in the Manchester Exhibition 1887. Date B.C. 1600. The catalogue says: These remarkable relics, the workmanship of royal artists 3,500 years ago, i.e., 200 years before the birth of Moses, are now being exhibited for the first time, by the kind permission of their owner, Jesse Haworth, Esq. Queen Hatasu was the favourite daughter of Thotmes I, and the sister of Thotmes II and III, Egyptian Kings of the XVIII dynasty. She reigned conjointly with her eldest brother, then alone for 15 years, and for a short time with her younger brother, Thotmes III. She was the Elizabeth of Egyptian history: had a masculine genius and unbounded ambition. A woman, she assumed male attire; was addressed as a king even in the inscriptions upon her monument. Her edifices are said to be "the most tasteful, most complete and brilliant creations which ever left the hands of an Egyptian architect." The largest and most beautifully executed obelisk; still standing at Karnak, bears her name. On the walls of her unique and beautiful temple at Dayr el Baharee, we see a naval expedition sent to explore the unknown land of Punt, the Somali country on the East coast of Africa near Cape Guardafui 600 years before the fleets of Solomon, and returning laden with foreign woods, rare trees, gums, perfumes and strange beasts. Here we have 1. Queen Hatasu's throne, made of wood foreign to Egypt, the legs most elegantly carved in imitation of the legs of an animal, covered with gold down to the hoof, finishing with a silver band. Each leg has carved in relief two Uroei, the sacred cobra serpent of Egypt, symbolic of a goddess. These are plated with gold. Each arm is ornamented with a serpent curving gracefully along from head to tail, the scales admirably imitated by hundreds of inlaid silver rings. The only remaining rail is plated with silver. The gold and silver are of the purest quality.

2. A fragment of the Cartouche or oval bearing the royal name, and once attached to the Throne; the hieroglyphics are very elegantly carved in relief, with a scroll pattern round the edge, and around one margin, and a palm frond pattern around the other. About one fourth of the oval remains, by means of which our distinguished Egyptologist, Miss Amelia B. Edwards, L.L.D., has been able to complete the name and identify the throne. On one side is the great Queen's throne name, Ru-ma-ka. On the other the family name, Amen Knem Hat Shepsu, commonly read Hatasu. With all its imperfections it is unique, being the only throne which has ever been disinterred in Egypt.
3. A female face boldy, but exquisitely carved in dark wood, from the lid of a coffin, the effigy strongly resembling the face of the sitting statue of Hatasu in the Berlin Museum: the eyes and double crown are lost.
4. The Signet: This is a Scarabaeus, in turquoise bearing the Cartouche of Queen Hatasu, once worn as a ring.
5. The Draught Box and Draughtmen: The box is of dark wood, divided on its upper side by strips of ivory into 30 squares, on its under side into 20 squares, 12 being at one end and 8 down the centre; some of these contained hieroglyphics inlaid, three of which still remain, also a drawer for holding the draughts. These draughts consist of about 20 pieces, carved with most exquisite art and finish in the form of lions' heads—the hieroglyphic sign for "Hat" in Hatasu. Also two little standing figures of Egyptian men like pages or attendants, perfect, and admirable specimens of the delicate Egyptian art. These may have been markers, or perhaps the principle pieces. Two sides of another draught box, of blue porcelain and ivory, with which are two conical draughts of blue porcelain and ivory and three other ivory pieces.
6. Also parts of two porcelain rings and porcelain rods, probably for some unknown game.
7. With the above were found a kind of salvo or perfume spoon in green slate, and a second in alabaster.

The coffin of Thotmes I and the bodies of Thotmes II and III, were found at Dayr el Baharee in 1881, that of their sister, Queen Hatasu, had disappeared but her cabinet was there, and is now in the Boulack Museum, and I have no doubt whatever, says Miss Edwards, "that this throne and these other relics are from that tomb."

### HIEROGLYPHICS OF ANCIENT EGYPT

NOTE. The name which occurs most frequently on the finest monuments of Egyptian art is Ramses, which immediately recalls the names of Rhamses, Ramesses, or Ramestes, and Raamses, (Exod. i., 11) occurring in Hebrew, Greek and Roman writers, and when we find this name with all its adjuncts, distinguishing some of the finest remains of antiquity from the extremity of Nubia to the shores of the Mediterranean, we are immediately led to ask whether this must not have been the title of Sesostris. The Flaminian obelisk at Rome, its copy, the Salustian, the Mahutean, and Medicean, in the same place; those at El-Ocsor, the ancient Thebes, and a bilingual inscription at Nahr-el-Kelb, in Syria, all bear this legend. The power and dominions of this Prince, must therefore have been of no ordinary magnitude; and such was in fact that of the Rhamses, whom the priests at Thebes described to Germanicus as the greatest conqueror who ever lived (Tacit. Annal. 11 p. 78 ed, Elzevir, 1649). But none of the ancient historians give this name to Sesostris. He is however called Sethos by Manetho who tells us (Joseph, contra, Apion, 1 p. 1053) that he was also called Rhameses, from his grandfather Rhampses, and thus affords a clue by which all doubt is removed; and as Sethos, Sesostris and Sessosis, are virtually the same name, and confessedly belong to the same person, so was the Rhamses of Tacitus and the REMSS of these hieroglyphical inscriptions, no other than that mighty conqueror. His grandfather is called Rhameses Meiammun by Manetho (15th King of the 18th dynasty) and that name appears in the great palace of Medinet Abu and some other buildings in the ruins of Thebes, but the one is always named Ramses Ammon-mei and has distinctive titles different from those of the other. This is alone sufficient to identify them; for as the Ptolemies were distinguished by their surnames Philadelphus,

Epiphanes, Soter so were the ancient Egyptian Kings by their peculiar titles, as is manifest from the double scrolls by which their names are usually expressed. >From the tomb of Ramses Mei-ammun, in the Biban-el-muluk, Mr. Belzoni brought the cover of his sarcophagus of red granite, ornamented with a recumbent figure of the deceased King in the character of Osiris. It is now preserved in the Fitz-William Museum at Cambridge, to which it was presented by that justly regretted traveller.

CORRECTION. The 16th King of the 18th dynasty he must have been if they were seventeen, for Sesostris in the tables is 1st King of the 19th dynasty.

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It is not unreasonable to infer that Egbert and even Offa, at about the end of the Eighth century may have known chess, which had become popular during their times, in Arabia, Greece, Spain and among the Franks and Aquitaines, these Saxon Kings were of an enquiring turn of mind, and not indifferent to what was passing on in other countries. Two hundred and fifty years had elapsed since chess had reached Persia, and contemporary monarchs were not altogether strange to one another's tastes and pursuits. Justinian and Chosroes held communication on historical and social matters, Harun of Bagdad, and the Princess Irene of Constantinople, as well as her predecessor, made special presents to Pepin and Charlemagne, including chess equipages which probably were considered suitable and fitting compliments at the time, and they seem to have been appreciated and highly valued, especially by Charlemagne, who evidently fancied himself at chess, and we find was somewhat demonstrative in his challenges.

Charlemagne must have known Egbert, who took refuge at his court for a time, before he became King of England, from the usurper Brithric. The biography of the celebrated scholar Alcuin, says that Charlemagne met him in Parma; but Hume is probably right in his statement that he was sent by Offa as the most proper person to meet the Emperor's views in aiding him to confute certain alleged heresies. This scholar was much esteemed and venerated by Charlemagne, and his family, and from his long domestication in his household, and familiarity with his habits and pursuits, could scarcely be ignorant of Charlemagne's enthusiasm for chess, and such a popular exponent of learning at the time as Alcuin was, might well have been known and favourably regarded by such a patron and enquirer as the famous Harun Ar Rashid of Bagdad, who must have corresponded with Charlemagne and sent his presents at the very time that Alcuin was residing with the Emperor.

NOTE. Offa died 794, Alcuin 804, Harun 809, Charlemagne 814, the great Al Mamun commenced to reign in 813, and he is undoubtedly reputed to have been the most mild, humane and enlightened of all the Khalifs. He was, however warlike also and expressed his surprise that he could not manage the mimic armies of the chess board like large forces on the field of battle.

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Canute's great partiality for chess seems well attested. The three successive royal assassinations recorded in Scandinavian history associated with chess incidents, need not alone be relied on and form not the most pleasing reading in connection with our now innocent, and harmless chess; neither perhaps is it a recommendation or evidence of the calmness, meditative tranquility and imperturbability so generally supposed to be incidental to the game, to repeat the authenticated statement that the son of Okbar was killed by King Pepin's son through the jealousy and irritation of the latter at being constantly beaten at chess, or that William the Conqueror in early days had to beat a precipitate retreat from France through assaulting the King's son over the chess board, and a somewhat similar misadventure in early days to Henry I, and John's unseemly fracas. It is related that an English knight seized the bridle of Philip Le Gros in battle, crying out, the king is taken, but was struck down by that monarch who observed, "Ne fais tu pas que aux echecs on ne prend pas le roi."

Among English monarchs, indeed, there are several which may be added to the list presented by Philidor which comprises only Elizabeth; James I and William III, of those omitted Canute, the first William, and perhaps Edwards I and IV, are the most notable before the time of the unfortunate Charles I, whose likeness is in one of the chess books, and whose chess men exhibited to the Society of Antiquaries were preserved in the possession of Lord Barrington. Items referring to chess are mentioned in expense accounts of Henry VII and Henry VIII. In a closet in the old royal palace of Greenwich, the last-named had a payre of chess men in a case of black lether—(Warton). The celebrated Ras, at Chelicut, was passionately fond of chess, provided he won, Charles the XII was much devoted to the game. In 1740 Frederick the Great writes: "Je suis comme le roi et echecs de Charles XII qui marchait toujours."

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### CANUTE

Sir Frederick Madden states in p. 280: Snorr Sturleson relates an anecdote of King Canute, which would prove that monarch to have been a great lover of the game. About the year 1028, whilst engaged in his warfare against the Kings of Norway and Sweden, Canute rode over to Roskild, to visit Earl Ulfr, the husband of his sister. An entertainment was prepared for their guest, but the King was out of spirits and did not enjoy it. They attempted to restore his cheerfulness by conversation, but without success. At length, the Earl challenged the King to play at chess, which was accepted, and, the chess table being brought, they sat down to their game. After they had played awhile, the King made a false move, in consequence of which Ulfr captured one of his opponent's Knights. But the King would not allow it, and replacing his piece, bade the Earl play differently. On this, the Earl (who was of a hasty disposition) waxing angry, overturned the chess board and left the room. The King called after him, saying, Ulfr, thou coward, dost thou thus flee? The Earl returned to the door, and said: You would have taken a longer flight in the river Helga, had I not come to your assistance, when the Swedes beat you like a dog—you did not then call me a coward. He then retired, and some days afterwards was murdered by the King's orders. This anecdote is corroborated (so far as the chess is concerned) by a passage in the anonymous history of the monastery of Ramsey, composed probably about the time of Henry I, where we are told, that Bishop Etheric coming one night at a late hour on urgent business to King Canute, found the monarch and his courtiers amusing themselves at the games of dice and chess.

In the year 1157 the Kingdom of Denmark was divided between three Monarchs: Svend, Valdemar, and Canute the Fifth. This took place after many years of contest, between Svend on the one hand, and Valdemar and Canute on the other. Each King was to rule over a third of the realm, and each swore before the altar to preserve the contract inviolate. But it did not last long. Canute asked his brother monarchs to spend a few days of festivity with him at Roskilde. Svend came with a crowd of soldiers. One evening Valdemar sat at the chess board where the battle waxed warm. His adversary was a nobleman, and Canute sat by Valdemar's side watching the game. All at once, Canute observing some suspicious consultations between Svend and one of his Captains, and feeling a presentiment of evil, threw his arms round Valdemar's neck and kissed him. Why so merry, cousin? asked the latter without removing his eyes from the chess board. You will soon see, replied Canute in an apprehensive tone. Just then the armed soldiery of Svend rushed into the apartment, slew Canute and severely wounded Valdemar. The last named having strapped his mantle about his arm to serve for a shield, extinguished the lights, and fought like a lion. He succeeded in making his escape and is known in history as the powerful Valdemar the Great.

A century later chess again makes its appearance upon the historic stage of Denmark. At that time, Eric Plovpenning or Ploughpenny as he was called, ruled wisely and well over the fierce and war loving people of that country. In the summer of 1250 he was on his way to defend the town of Rendsborg against the attack of some German bands, when he received an invitation from his brother Abel to visit him in Slesvig. The unsuspecting and open hearted Eric accepted. After dinner, on the 9th of August, the same day of his arrival,



he retired to a little pleasure house near the water to enjoy a quiet game of chess with a knight whose name was Henrik Kerkwerder. As they were playing the black-hearted Abel entered the room, marched up to the chess table, accompanied by several of his followers, and began to overwhelm the King with abuse. At length, the unfortunate Eric was thrown into chains and was basely murdered that very night.

The American Chess Monthly gives the following anecdote, but does not state its source.

### THE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE AND CHESS

Among the anecdotes related of the childhood of the Princess Charlotte, the daughter of a rascally father, and of an unfortunate mother, there is a story which we do not remember to have seen in any periodical devoted to the game. It is perfectly authentic, and runs thus:

"Being one evening present when a game of chess was playing. The sudden and triumphant exclamation of checkmate was given. On her inquiring its meaning, she was informed, it is when the King is enprise by any particular piece, and cannot move without falling into the hands of an enemy. `That is indeed a bad situation for a King,' said the little patriotic stateswoman, but it can never be the fate of the King of England, so long as he conforms to the laws, for then he meet with protection from his subjects."

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We can find nothing in the form of evidence, as to whether either of our four kings, the Georges, took any interest in chess, or played at it. Some of our greatest men we hear, looked in occasionally at the club in St. James St., to witness Philidor's performances. Chatham, Fox, Pitt, Godolphin, Sunderland, Rockingham, Wedderburn, St. John, Sir G. Elliott, and many others, most distinguished and celebrated at the time, have been specially mentioned as visitors or members. As only those who know or care for the game subscribe to chess books, the three hundred principal names on Philidor's edition of 1777, affords a significant proof of the extraordinary appreciation and support of the game, throughout the period of his ascendancy, viz., from 1746 to 1795.

Twenty-six ladies of title grace that list, which contains a large proportion of the nobility, cabinet ministers, men distinguished in science, and at the bar, and on the bench, and several eminent divines.

Prince Leopold's support of chess, and encouraging remarks concerning it at Oxford, in Scotland and at the Birkbeck, had much to do with the taste for the game which sprung up among the humbler working classes, and which happily has been continuously though steadily progressing.

One of our most genial and reliable chess editors has recently informed us, on very high authority, that even our Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, has at times shewn an appreciation of chess.

Three years after the commencement of her reign the first County Chess Association, was formed in Yorkshire. There were at this time but twelve chess clubs in this country. The year 1849 signalised the first Chess Tournament found on record, it took place at Simpson's, and Mr. H. T. Buckle writer and author, the best amateur at this time, came forth first. This was two years before the first world's International Chess Tournament of 1851, was held in London, of which the Prince Consort was patron, since then thirty-four National Tournaments and forty-eight country meetings, and twenty University matches between Oxford and Cambridge have taken place.

It is now reasonably estimated that there are quite five hundred clubs, and institutions where chess is practiced and cultivated, and near one hundred and fifty chess columns, and both press notice and chess clubs are continually on the increase.

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### THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Simpson's renowned establishment was opened by Mr. Samuel Ries on its present site 100 and 101 Strand in 1828. It was soon found to afford the most admirable facilities for the quiet and comfortable enjoyment of chess, and hence became greatly appreciated and proportionately patronized, and has always been regarded by the best and most impartial friends of chess with sentiments of extraordinary partiality.

Its influence on the practice and development of chess has been of a very remarkable character, and of the first and highest importance, and notwithstanding the migration of some of its members on the occasions of the formation of the ill-fated Westminster and West End Chess Clubs in 1867 and 1875, and again on the institution of the present British Chess Club in 1885, its popularity is maintained to this day.

The chess events, anecdotes, and reminiscences of Simpson's must ever form a most interesting chapter in the English or National history of chess for the Nineteenth century, and is intimately linked with that of the whole chess world. As the arena of the finest and most brilliant chess play Simpson's still stands, and has ever done so, pre-eminently first, from the time of A. McDonnell of Belfast, and L. de La Bourdonnais of Paris, and their first appearance there in 1828 and 1829 to the present day, and it is there (and there alone) that can still be witnessed in this country a competition or tournament open to all comers conceived in the spirit of pure enthusiasm only, and it is to Simpson's that lovers of the game must still resort if they wish to see really fine contests between the recognized greatest players. It was here that H. T. Buckle, the writer and author in 1849 gained leading honours in the first tournament ever held on British soil, or so far as is known, on any soil. About this time it was that the school of young players with some of whose games the public have become familiarized and pleased in later years, begun to radiate, educate, and progress. Bird as a boy, became a favourite opponent of Mr. Buckle, so early as 1846. Boden soon followed, and by the year 1851, both had, it was supposed, reached about the force of Mr. Buckle, and were hailed with welcome as British chess representatives of the highest class, and at this period and for a quarter of a century afterwards no games were watched with greater interest than those in the love contests between Boden and Bird, and no names are more familiarly associated with Divan chess play. The former has departed this life, but the latter still plays, having within the past year or two, twice secured first prize in Simpson's Tournaments, and first position in 1889 and third in 1890, though his forte is rather for rapid and lively play, which he cultivates now rather more than in his younger days, otherwise his style of 1848 and 1852 compared with 1873, 1889 and 1892 remains the same in its characteristic features. Bird's games with Anderssen in 1852 (his best performance), with those against Morphy in 1858, Steinitz in 1866, and Wisker (British Champion) in 1873, rank among the most notable encounters at Simpson's. Among the most recent events of the greatest interest at Simpson's have been the visit of Dr. Tarrasch, of Nuremberg, after his great International victory at Manchester, the splendid performance of young Loman the Dutch Champion in Simpson's Spring Tournament (following his grand City of London successes and that in Holland). The recent games of Blackburne and Bird, and Lasker and Bird have been other events of popular chess interest.

To return to old times, (to boyhood days), it was during the years 1844 to 1850 that English ascendancy in chess first became universally recognized. As noticed in the History of Chess elsewhere the supremacy of chess in past ages back to the Sixth century, when Persia (as well as China received chess from India) has alternately rested with Arabia, Spain, Italy and France, while the question of the hour now is whether Germany or England is best entitled to claim possession of the chess sceptre. The famous series of contests in 1834 at the old Westminster Chess Club in Bedford Street, Covent Garden, between McDonnell and de La Bourdonnais may certainly be regarded as the inauguration of the spirited matches between individuals and representatives, both International and National, which have since become so popular. The following was the result of this great conflict, La Bourdonnais won 41, McDonnell 29, and there were 13 drawn. The Evans attack, which had been invented by Capt. W. D. Evans in 1830, was played 23 times: the attack won 15, the

defence 5, and 3 were drawn. These memorable contests are generally considered to have given the first great impetus to International chess competition which became further cemented and consolidated by the match between the Champions of England and France, Staunton and St. Amant in 1843, and the first World's Tournament held at the St. George's Chess Club Rooms in Cavendish Square, London, in 1851. Staunton maintained his title to the British Championship until this great International event took place which was signalized by the decisive victory of Prof. Anderssen, of Breslau. Staunton made no real effort to recover his laurels afterwards or to in any way reassert English claims to supremacy. The foreign players, after the Tournament, Szen, Lowenthal, Kiezeritzky, Mayet, Jaenisch, Harrwitz and Horwitz frequented Simpson's and Anderssen (like Morphy seven years later) greatly favoured the place, and readily engaged in skirmishes of the more lively enterprising, and brilliant description in which he ever met a willing opponent in Bird, who, though a comparatively young player, to the surprise and gratification of all spectators, made even games. This young player who it seems had acquired his utmost form at this time, also won the two only even games he ever played with Staunton, and also two from Szen, which occasioned yet more astonishment, the last-named having been regarded by many deemed good judges, the best player in the world before the Tournament was held, and even in higher estimation than his fellow countryman Lowenthal, and considered not inferior to Staunton himself. Judging from the success of this the youngest player who was certainly not superior if equal to Buckle or Boden, it is not unreasonable to conclude that Staunton with his greater experience and skill, had he possessed the same temperament as Bird, and at the slow time limit which suited him as well as it has Steinitz (his exact counterpart in force and style) would have regained his ascendancy for Great Britain. It is undoubtedly owing to the opportunities at Simpson's that Boden and Bird so rapidly acquired first rank and the partial withdrawal of the former, and the entire relinquishment of chess by the latter from 1852 to 1858 was unfortunate for English chess renown, for on the appearance of the phenomenon, Paul Morphy, and Staunton's default in meeting him, there was no English player in practise able to do honor to Morphy over the board, except a new comer, Barnes; and Boden and Bird, but acquiesced in a general wish, (albeit an equal pleasure to themselves) in revisiting Simpson's to play with the subsequently found to be invincible Morphy.

Simpson's Divan was naturally the first resort of the incomparable Paul Morphy, and he greatly preferred it to any other chess room he ever saw, he even went so far as to say it was "very nice," which was a great deal from him, the most undemonstrative young man we ever met with. Certainly nothing else in London, from St. Paul's, Westminster Abbey and the Tower to our Picture Galleries and Crystal Palace, not even the Duke of Wellington's Equestrian Statue, elicited such praise from him as "very nice," at least as applied to any inanimate object.

Louis Paulsen arriving from America in 1861, at once visited the Divan and played twelve games blindfold simultaneously there against a very powerful team amid much enthusiasm, it being the earliest exhibition among us on so large a scale. Morphy had in 1858 played eight games blindfold both in Birmingham and Paris. This was 63 years after Philidor's exhibition of two games blindfold (and one over the board) a performance then thought marvellous, and which it was predicted would not be believed or attempted in any future generation. However we read of A. McDonnell playing without seeing the board and men in 1830. Bilguer in like manner did so sometime before his death in 1841. La Bourdonnais in 1842, and Harrwitz at Hull in 1847, but neither more than two games. Paulsen in the West of America 1855–6–7, was the first to accomplish ten or twelve games blindfold, which he did with very marked success. Steinitz from Prague, who for twenty-two years, from 1867 to 1889, has been regarded as chess champion of the world, at the usual slow time limit is now residing in Brooklyn, New York. Soon after his arrival from Vienna in 1862 he became a tolerably regular attendant at Simpson's, and it was through this that his appointment of Chess Editor to the "Field" arose, as well as that of Mr. Hoffer who superseded him in that post. Mr. Walsh, chief Editor of the "Field," had been for many years a constant visitor at Simpson's, and the column for a long time was not favourable to our chess interests. Foreign influence and views became far too conspicuously manifested. The great English chess players were of a retiring nature after the disappearance of the powerful Staunton and Captain Kennedy, and the retirement of the genial McDonnell; Boden was as reserved as

## Chess History and Reminiscences

Buckle or as Morphy, Bird cared only for his game. Such eggs of chess patronage as continued to exist, somehow or other always found their way into one and the same basket, to which no British master could have access. No eminent English player had any voice in chess management, and though the Jubilee year's proceedings, bid fair to balance matters on a more cosmopolitan basis, the facts remain that for the three last German Tournaments at Frankfort, Breslau and Dresden, neither Lee nor Pollock, the youngest, nor Bird, the oldest master, could on either occasion manage to participate.

Small, but very enjoyable first class Tournaments have been held at Simpson's, which have always evoked a considerable degree of enthusiasm, and at times stimulated energy in the constituted authorities, and been productive of Tournaments on a larger scale elsewhere.

Notwithstanding that the Mammoth laws of Limited Liability in 1867, absorbed the gorgeous and spacious Divan Saloon, for the present ladies dining room, and somewhat lessened the chess accommodation, the distinguishing characteristics of the place have remained unchanged, while the glorious chess events and reminiscences continue nearly as vividly fixed in the recollection as ever.

The interest felt in the associations of Simpson's, have in fact continued unabated from the days of the supremacy of La Bourdonnais, Staunton, and Morphy, to the time of Steinitz's appearance in 1862, and, to the triumphs of Blackburne, Cap. Mackenzie and Gunsberg in our own days, and Bird the winner of the Tournament just held there, who has frequented the room for forty-five years, still plays the game, with a vigour equal to that displayed against the greatest foreign players in 1852, and with scarcely less success. The transactions in chess connected with Simpson's for the last quarter of a century, would fill a good size volume, only including events of the greatest interest to chess players. The lapse of the British Chess Association of 1862, and the wane of the less successful B.C.A. of 1885, during a period when chess has been making such rapid strides that clubs have more than doubled, is a very remarkable feature in modern chess play and its management. The seven years operations and accounts of the present British Chess Association, though it had the advantage of such names as Tennyson, Ruskin, Churchill and Peel, on its presidential list, have not resulted in one half the patronage, accorded to the Tournaments of 1851 and 1883, mainly promoted by one single club, (the St. Georges') at times when no Association of a public kind, ostensibly for the support, improvement, and extension of worthy chess existed.

The eminent masters of the art of chess, registered in the list of the British Chess Association of 1862, numbered 30, now there are but 10, such has been the effect of the management of a game yearly and daily increasing in favourable estimation, and the practice of which, judging from the increase of chess clubs, press notice and favour, sale of chess equipages of all kinds, and other indications conclusively prove, must have increased at least ten-fold in the present generation.

Simpson's has done most to assist in cultivating force and style in chess, and to prevent it becoming the idle amusement which at least one great philosopher has told us it is not, and ought not to be, and the only three recognized new masters which have risen up in the Metropolis during the present generation, can be directly traced to its opportunities and influence. This same period has witnessed the rise and fall of two chess clubs, the Westminster formed in 1867, at Covent Garden, and the West End in Coventry St., in 1875, both (wonderfully successful at first), having lamentably failed through the predominating card influence and lack of undivided fealty and devotion to their legitimate and avowed objects, viz., the chivalrous practice and earnest cultivation of the noble and royal game of chess. Cards and social pleasures (so called) cliquism, with the principles of mutual admiration so strongly in force there, have already seriously undermined the constitution of the British Chess Club, or the British Club as it is now more properly called, and the fate of this third combination from its original avowed point of view that is for chess purposes, may be considered as virtually sealed, unless chess be at once restored to something nearer approaching its acknowledged true position.

## Chess History and Reminiscences

At Simpson's of our own countrymen, A. McDonnell in 1829, and Howard Staunton in 1842, each first in fame of his time, and the two greatest British chess players who ever lived mostly practiced.

Steinitz admits that his pre-eminency in chess is greatly due to the facilities of Simpson's, and the courtesies of his early opponents. The luxurious couches, tables, and mirrors, (NOTE. When Bird first visited Simpson's and was playing his first game, he became uneasy at finding so great a mirror at his back, and was greatly troubled at the bare possibility of his coming in contact with it. He was however completely reassured by John, who solemnly informed him that the glass was thicker than his head, and much less likely to crack.) with the splendid light afforded, tempted many visitors who played not chess, to resort there for pleasing converse, combined with ease and comfort, and a record of the distinguished men who have been seen in the Divan, would make an illustrious list. H. T. Buckle (already referred to as most eminent of amateur players) in his chess references, calls Simpson's a favourite half holiday resort, for an occasional change and striking relief in a game of chess, so different from his usual meditative pursuits, and the arena and play of chess, has been so regarded by eminent men of all grades and branches of knowledge. Among other English chess players of the past and present generation, that have come into front rank there, are Boden and Bird, the most successful of the young rising players during Staunton's ten years chess reign. No games on record seem to have occasioned more interest than the contests between these two favourite opponents, unfortunately neither made any practice of recording games, which is rather a subject of regret, for they were much in request by chess editors in England as well as in America and Germany. The few on record owe their preservation mostly to lookers on, who took them down. Boden and Bird were never known to play for a stake, not even for the time honored and customary shilling. In 1852 Barnes, and a few years later Cap. Mackenzie, the Rev. G. A. MacDonnell, and Cecil de Vere, began to adorn the first class chess circle, in 1862 our unsurpassed Blackburne appeared to the front almost simultaneously with Steinitz, and ten years later the amiable Dr. Zukertort (the winner of the Paris International of 1878, and the great London "Criterion" Tournament of 1883), came to this country, and was destined to create nearly as much sensation in chess circles as Paul Morphy (who appeared 14 years before him, and 4 before Steinitz and Blackburne) had done, and it may be safely asserted that Dr. Zukertort's play in 1883, has never been surpassed even by Morphy's and Anderssen's very best performances, though Anderssen excelled both in fertility of invention. The "fondness" of Dr. Zukertort, like that of his distinguished Berlin townsman, Anderssen the renowned winner of 1851, 1862 and 1870), for Simpson's, and its Associations was very great, and increased very much towards the latter part of his life, and the place has always formed a strong bond of union between Foreign and English players. Zukertort was engaged in conversation with the writer and others, in his usual genial manner, and spent some happy hours with us on the evening preceding his death. Every true lover of chess must appreciate the chivalry and good feelings always observable in chess play at Simpson's. There only leading players for mutual pleasure and without stake, and to the interest of spectators play many an emulatory game which may bear comparison with the best of the few good ones to be found in the most recent tedious chess matches played for amounts not thought of in previous times, and sufficient to disconcert and make timid both of the opponents. With our Foreign visitors, Simpson's Divan is the first resort to meet old friends, to hear chess news, to compare notes, and to discuss topics of interest. It is a kind of landmark, or where the pilot comes aboard. When they do not dine at Simpson's, which is regarded as "par excellence," but retire to Darmstatters, the Floric or the Cheshire Cheese for refreshment, the Divan is yet the Appetizer, or Sherry and Bitter starting point, in fact, wherever the abodes of our distinguished chess brethren may be, Simpson's is always the centre and home of friendly attraction throughout their stay in this country, and so long as harmony and good feeling prevails it is ever likely to continue so.

For Clubs may come, and Clubs may go,  
And make us ask what's next to see;  
But Simpson's ever should remain,  
The place for Chess in ecstasy.

The above article was run off for the late deeply lamented Captain Mackenzie, the amiable and dignified United States Chess Champion, on one of his visits here. I dedicate it to our surviving foreign visitors.

## CHESS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The following article from The British Chess Magazine furnished by the writer has been regarded with much interest, we are tempted to re-produce it.

### THE CHESS MASTERS OF THE DAY, IMPARTIALLY CONSIDERED BY AN OLD ENGLISH PLAYER.

An article appeared in The Fortnightly Review of December, 1886 bearing the signature of L. Hoffer, Secretary of the B.C.A., entitled "The Chess Masters of the Day." We are informed that the British Masters, who have read it are unanimous in condemning its tone and spirit; and a short letter of protest has been inserted in the March number of the same magazine, from H. E. Bird, specifying their principal objections to it! In a letter to us, Mr. Bird, incidentally, mentions that the article bears the semblance of having been prepared by more than one writer; and he suggests that a confusion of ideas may account for the discrepancies in it? He then proceeds to question Mr. Hoffer's authority for adding B.C.A. after his name, presumably for the purpose of giving weight to the article which it is contended does not meet with the general approbation of members of the British Chess Association, or other real lovers of chess and friends to its cause and advancement. The remarks of Mr. Bird, which we understand, are heartily concurred in by all the British Chess Masters, we give precisely in his own words.

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However entertaining and amusing the article which appears in The Fortnightly Review, entitled "The Chess Masters of the Day," bearing the signature of L. Hoffer, may prove to the general reader, there are reasons why it is not likely to pass the more observant chess friend and true lover of the game without grave misgivings and deep regret; and it is probably not very rash to predict that, notwithstanding, the smile that may be evoked here and there at the expense of the unhappy lampooned Chess Masters, the feeling most predominant at the close of reading the article will be very near akin to extreme disappointment?

It is but fair, at the outset, to observe that the writer does not seem to claim that his article is a disquisition on the game of chess; that it is not so may, at once, be granted; but, it is unfortunate that even as a record of what it purports to be, viz., "The Chess Masters of the Day," a few lines will suffice to show that it is not sufficiently connected, reliable, or complete to form a chapter in chess history, or to be of any lasting interest from a descriptive Chess Master's point of view.

Having first generalised the main contents of the article, we may then proceed to point out its shortcomings, as well as the more serious objections to it.

Of the 13 pages and 533 lines to which the article extends, more than three-fourths are devoted to foreign players; that apportioned, by the author, to panegyric of his present colleague, Zukertort and to sneers, and personalities bordering on vituperation of his past friend, the World's Champion, Steinitz, being about equally balanced.

To the English Chess Masters mentioned, four in number, Blackburne, Burn, Bird, and Mackenzie, the space allotted is less than a fifth of that given to four foreign Masters, Zukertort, Steinitz, Rosenthal, and Lowenthal. The writer himself also figuring somewhat conspicuously.

The reason for the introduction, and at such length, of the name of the distinguished Hungarian player, Lowenthal, into an article presumably by title intended for living Masters, is not at all apparent—he died in 1876. Anderssen, far more successful if not far greater as a chess-player considered by many, including the writer of this article, as King of all chess-players, who lived till 1879, is not even mentioned. The selection

may seem to have been made for effect, and for the purpose of reproducing certain too oft repeated jokes and quaint notions commonly attributed to Lowenthal; that highly agreeable and justly popular gentleman having apparently been regarded (if the expression may be permitted) as a very convenient peg on which to hang some funny sayings and ideas.

Horwitz, who died in 1884, is also in the article, supplying further pleasantry. There will not be wanting, however, many chess-players who will consider a description of Anderssen's play, and great Championship and Tournament Victories of 1851, 1862, and 1870 of at least equal interest.

Rosenthal of Paris, next to Steinitz and Zukertort, absorbs the largest space among living players, more in fact than all the British Masters combined; here again supposed witticisms and pleasantries open up at the expense of the volatile and amiable Polish player; no other plausible explanation appears to offer for the prominence and length of space devoted to Rosenthal. The name of a much greater though more demure Master, happily still in the flesh, Von Heydebrand Der Lasa, considered by many, including Morphy, as the finest chess-player of his time, and certainly one of the most distinguished of foreign writers, is not even mentioned.

The Prussian Masters are entirely omitted; Paulsen, most modest and distinguished, certainly, one of the greatest players and not second to any but Blackburne as a blindfold artist, why is he forgotten? Bardeleben, winner of the Vizayanagram All-comers' Tournament, Criterion, London, 1883, is another unaccountable omission. Where is the incomparable Schallop, the present Prussian champion? His welcome visits from Berlin, and performances unsurpassed for brilliancy at Hereford in 1885, as well as London and Nottingham this year, are still pleasurably remembered by us all. The absence of Paulsen, Bardeleben, Schallop, and Riemann, all living Masters of the highest excellence, has the effect of excluding Prussia altogether, and makes a portentous void, as it would do in any article on chess.

Tchigorin of St. Petersburg would probably, at the present time, be equal favourite against any player in the world except perhaps Steinitz. Though behind the Champion in Tournament record, the young Russian player has been successful against him in three out of four individual contests.

Tchigorin is leader of the Russian Chess Committee in the St. Petersburg Chess Club now conducting the telegraph match against the British Chess Club. His absence from a list of the greatest living Masters is a grave oversight, and this most likely is accidental; the omission of the only great Russian chess representative, we have had the honour of welcoming to our Chess Circle, could hardly have been intended.

Coming to players of the past in our own country, Great Britain is made to occupy a very far back seat, and in this respect at least Russia, Prussia, and England, through their representatives, may join in mutual sympathy and condolence.

There can be no jealousy where all are ignored! We are tempted to ask, "What can be thought or said of an article which, professing to portray and describe Chess Masters, devotes near a page to Lowenthal and more to Rosenthal, yet not a line to Staunton or to Buckle?" Can the Reviewer have forgotten that Staunton and Lowenthal were contemporary; if not, what can be the explanation of such an omission?

Howard Staunton's name is certainly not second to any, however illustrious, ever known in chess, he will ever be remembered as the greatest chess-player of his day; and was the most vigorous and entertaining of chess writers. Having witnessed his play during 1845 to 1849, when he was still in full force, deep impressions remain with us of his extraordinary powers of combination, his soundness and accuracy. Although comparison of chess-players, who lived or were in practice at different times appear of little use or value, we yet have been tempted once more to compare Staunton's, Anderssen's, Morphy's and Steinitz's best games without arriving at any conclusion except that Anderssen's style still appears more inventive and finer than

any other, while Steinitz is pre-eminently for care and patience.

H. T. Buckle, writer and author, who died in 1862, was for many years the strongest amateur player, mostly considered a shade weaker than Staunton, but regarded by many as equal, like Steinitz in style, sound and safe, running no risks, exactly the reverse of that of Bird, who became his opponent on equal terms in 1852.

All chess admirers, not in this country alone, but throughout the world, would like to have seen the names of Staunton and Buckle, and the more recent ones of Boden and Wisker as much as those of Lowenthal and Horwitz. Less convenient for facetious observation, it is yet more than probable that the grand chess researches, works and sayings of the English champion and Shakespearian Editor, and the *Diary Chess Extracts* of the highly accomplished author of "The History of Civilization," (in which reference is made to the relief and enjoyment afforded by chess), would have interested the chess public fully as much as the description of Lowenthal's shirt front, Rosenthal's grammar, Winawer's inodorous and unsavoury cigars, or the fact that the author had played billiards with M. Grevy, the President of the French Republic, and that he was in a position to contradict the statement that Zukertort came over in two ships. There are many old players and admirers, and perhaps some young ones, who would have felt both gratified and interested at a brief, descriptive sketch of de La Bourdonnais and McDonnell, and their great and never to be forgotten contests; Staunton and St. Amant's championship match, England v. France, which occasioned more genuine interest and enthusiasm than any other chess event of this century, would also have been a welcome and pleasing addition.

Coming to English players, the absence of the name of the Rev. G. A. MacDonnell, one of the most accomplished writers, experts, and masters of the game, cannot be satisfactorily explained. He is (though rarely practising) full of vigour. Independently of his skill as a player, he is regarded as a living institution in chess. For a quarter of a century, with the late Mr. Boden, and Bird still living he has been one of the foremost amateurs; as a writer, he has contributed as much to the amusement and edification of chess readers as any author known. He always has been, and is still highly popular, with many intensely so; his geniality is so great, as well as his wit, that his society is eagerly sought, and always enjoyed. The omission of the name of such a notable, worthy representative and general favourite, is alone sufficient to detract from the value of the article to no inconsiderable extent; if really intended as a trustworthy narrative and record of the world's Chess Masters.

The Amateur Masters are not so numerous that they need have been passed over. The Rev. W. Wayte is alike distinguished for his honorary writings in support of chess, and his brilliant victories, at times, against the finest players, extending over a long period, not very far short of the experience of the writer of these lines. He is, in addition to his many well-known scholarly qualifications, a very distinguished amateur chess master, a liberal supporter of the game, and by many looked up to as the head of the circle. His name would grace any article. Mr. Minchin's national and international services are too well-known to require comment and he would deprecate any reference to them; still I must express the opinion that he has earned the gratitude of the entire chess-playing world for his disinterested services in promoting and so largely contributing to the success of great and popular gatherings. Mr. Thorold's eminence as an exponent, and modesty and courtesy as an opponent, are known to all; whilst Mr. Watkinson, though now out of practice, was an equally forcible player, and has rendered inestimable benefits to the cause of chess by conducting, for many years, a journal of the highest class; which has never wounded the susceptibilities of a member of the circle. The life-long services of the Rev. Mr. Skipworth ought not to be forgotten; he is, when free from his official duties, quite formidable as an adversary, and is ever ready and willing to test conclusions with the best of players. The Rev. C. E. Ranken, too, a very strong player and analyst, has, in many ways, been of great service to the cause of chess.

Should the reader's stock of astonishment be at all limited, heavy draws will have been already made upon it; yet another call, however, remains, and that the most recent and in many respects the most unaccountable.



The advent of a new chess master after a lapse of twenty years is in itself an event of considerable interest in the chess world. W. H. K. Pollock was early last year admittedly a master, in the opinion of many considered competent to judge. In August of last year he won the first prize in the "Irish Chess Association one game Master Tournament," winning from Blackburne, Burn, and six leading Irish players. He is most modest and very chivalrous, always ready to play on convenient occasions for pure love of the game and credit of victory alone. This is truly a strange omission.

The author's assertion with regard to Morphy is that "He was head and shoulders above the players of his time." What precise degree of superiority that may imply in chess is not easy to define, and must be left to the imagination of the reader. As a matter of fact Mr. Hoffer never saw Morphy; and his statement is based upon his published games and public chess opinion; which, it is true, mostly awards Morphy the highest place in modern chess history; his title, however, is principally based upon his victories over Anderssen and Lowenthal, the former in bad health, and not in his best form at the time! Staunton and Buckle, the best English players of their day, never encountered Morphy. Against Harwitz he won five to three, and fourteen to six against Barnes. Morphy's record, though great, is not superior to Staunton's before, and Steinitz's after him. There do not appear sufficient grounds for estimating one more highly than the other. Foreign critics sometimes as well as English ones have been apt for purposes of inferential comparison to exalt one player and proportionately disparage another; thus chess critics, with whom Staunton does not stand in the highest favour in the past, or Steinitz in the present, too often indulge in the most extravagant statements as to Morphy's immeasurable superiority, not based on conclusive grounds; when the games and evidence are closely and impartially tested.

The rapidly advancing chess skill of so many young amateurs in the present day is a great stimulus to the rising generation of chess-players, especially to such as aim at a high state of proficiency; and, though this may be regarded as one of the most interesting and popular features in the pursuit the author of the article in question makes no reference to this branch of the subject. The gradual introduction of the game as a mental recreation into seats of learning and industrial establishments, and the formation of many Working Men's Chess Clubs are now well known; the result is that for the first time within the recollection of present players several amateurs have come to the front scarcely inferior in force to the new Master, Pollock, whilst some in style may compete with him! Anger, Donisthorpe, Guest, Hooke, Hunter, Jacobs, and Mills, with the most successful of the past University Chess Teams, Chepmell, Gattie, Gwinner, Locock, Plunkett, and Wainwright, are names scarcely less familiar than those of the half dozen older masters left, who form the remnant of the little band of twenty recognised masters living in 1854.

Chess has become far more general than it formerly was because it is better understood. Old fashioned notions that it was too serious and necessitated an unreasonable absorption of time, are passing away. A well-known amateur, whose games please the public much and are greatly admired in Professor Ruskin's letters has played many of his best specimens within an hour, some in half that time. This same player states that he recurs with great interest, though melancholy in its character, to some games, he has played with those afflicted in various ways, on account of the solace and consolation as well as pleasure it has been found to afford him! The excellent contests some blind boys made against him with their raised boards; the enjoyment they expressed and felt, as conveyed to him by the master of the Asylum, is vivid in his remembrance. Chess has proved highly beneficial to such of the lower classes, as have been fortunate enough to resort to it, in place of more exciting and expensive indoor games. The mental exercise called into play is of the most healthy character; and those who interest themselves in the welfare of their less fortunate brethren may benefit them and society, by assisting to diffuse a better knowledge of its advantages for those at present uninterested in it.

There may be something in the author's opinion that no extraordinary mental power is needed for chess excellence; but his views, probably, would have been more valuable if less general, and expressed with such qualifications as the history of its masters suggests; his idea, however, that anyone of average capacity may

play average chess, is not in accordance with experience, if, indeed, it is not decidedly in opposition to it. Some of the finest players may appear to Mr. Hoffer to possess but average intellect; but, whether he is right or not, one thing is certain, that many with the greatest endowments and known powers of calculation and thought have failed at it and some have been candid enough to admit that they abandoned the game because dissatisfied with their own progress and skill at it. Buckle in his opinion given by MacDonnell in "Life Pictures," (the amusing and interesting work of the latter), considers imagination and calculation necessary, but discards any idea of superior mental capacity.

It is clear, however, that the qualifications necessary to be met with cannot well be defined; we have never found any successful attempt to do so. Franklin did not attempt it. We find by experience that a likely man fails and an unlikely one succeeds. Stock-brokers have been very successful—mathematicians quite the reverse. Twenty or thirty eminent players, barristers and solicitors, may be quoted to four engineers and accountants, the latter, however, including one of the masters! The Church has been very prolific as well as medicine.

>From the programmes of our more recent tournaments we find the most distinguished names of supporters, and the British Chess Association is honoured with those of Lord Tennyson, Lord Randolph Churchill, Professor Ruskin, and Sir Robert Peel on its presidential list. The late Prince Leopold was Patron of the St. George's Club, and President of the Oxford University Chess Club. The late J. P. Benjamin, Q.C., and formerly, Sir C. Russell were among its admirers and supporters. Sir H. James and Sir H. Giffard also honour the list; and a very brilliant amateur in past days, (scarcely inferior to John Cochrane and Mr. Daniels), W. Mackeson, Q.C., still honours the chess clubs with an occasional visit, willingly taking a board and invariably running a hard race of combination with the best performers. Earl Granville, the Marquis of Hartington, the Marquis of Ripon, and the Right Hon. H. C. Childers, M.P., have also appeared as patrons and supporters.

Blackburne, Steinitz, and Zukertort, our three greatest professional players, will not feel highly complimented to hear, for the first time, that their excellence arises from twenty years hard labour; and that inferentially their capacity, otherwise, is but common. Memory, a quality not mentioned by the Reviewer or by Mr. Buckle, must be essential in the playing of chess for hours without sight of board or men; it must be also advantageous in the ordinary game, when many variations have to be worked out; or the earlier combinations might be forgotten when the latter are maturing.

Steinitz is now residing in New York, (this fact might well have been stated) and the attacks upon him in his absence, moreover, can hardly interest or gratify chess readers. These attacks are in the worst possible taste; being calculated to lead to controversy with his friends and supporters, who are still numerous, both here and abroad. They will arouse a well merited and just sense of indignation for despite his faults of temper and a disposition, at times, prone to be touchy and contentious, Steinitz is a true artist, a painstaking, careful, conscientious, and impartial annotator, whilst as a describer of play he is unrivalled. Willing, at all times, to render full justice to the skill, style, and play of others, he has been frequently heard to observe that the "difference in force between the six leading chess-players is so slight, that the result of a contest between two of them would be always uncertain."

As a chess-player he is far from lacking modesty. No "head and shoulders" comparison or claim of superiority has ever been made by Steinitz. He is exceedingly courteous to young aspirants, and fairly communicative to all; he is, when vexed, as likely, (or more so), to offend his best friends as strangers. With all his shortcomings, however, it is doubtful whether any real admirer of chess from its highest aspect will feel aught but regret at the remarks applied to him; the space devoted to these attacks (exceeding that allotted to all the English players) might well have been devoted to chess in its social aspect, to its advantages and prospects, or to some more agreeable phase of it than extreme personality. Even another page or two of chess-players' jokes and eccentricities would have been less objectionable.

The personalities and lack of impartiality in the article cannot but be regarded as a very serious drawback; it is not written in a tone which is likely to benefit chess or advance its cause; and it is to be feared, that it will afford but little instruction or lasting interest and pleasure to its readers.

### **NATIONAL CHESS.**

CHESS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. BELFAST, (THE MOST RECENT MEETING).

As the events of the day or of the hour generally command the most immediate interest in chess (as in many more important things), we may commence notice of National Chess with the memorable event which has most recently engaged public chess attention, viz., the North of Ireland Chess Congress just concluded in the City of Belfast. The history of First Class Modern Chess Competition upon an emulatory scale in our country may be almost said to begin with Ireland. We know that a little band of chess enthusiasts assembled regularly in Dublin so early as 1819, and that the knowledge of it had a material influence on the advance of chess practice at the time, and so far as we can gather the letter from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1850, was the suggestion which first led to discussions which resulted in the World's International Chess Tournament, (the first on record) held in London in the succeeding year. There is little doubt moreover among old chess players, and probably will be with observant young ones either, that from the appearance of the courteous and chivalrous A. McDonnell, of Belfast, in 1828, may be dated the origin of genuine first class chess rivalry. It was McDonnell's skill, courage, perseverance and gallant stand against the famous Louis de La Bourdonnais, of France, in 1834, and his successes against all the other competitors he met with, and the encouragement that his example inspired, which first established British claims to ability in chess, and an equal reputation with the best of other countries in the exposition of the game.

>From Greco's debut in Paris in 1626 to Philidor's first appearance at London in 1746, (about 120 years) forms the first of three previous epochs of chess progress; Philidor's own distinguished career to 1795, a second, and the next quarter of a century, to the first great correspondence match between Edinburgh and London, when books on the game, literature, and the formation of chess clubs first became conspicuous, marks the third epoch, from Queen Elizabeth's time when probably chess first became the subject of any considerable notice, or indication of approach to more general practice and appreciation.

NOTE. The extent to which the 1851 and 1883 Tournaments were aided by Indian feeling and support is another great and pleasing feature. The names of Cochrane and Minchin stand foremost in memory among the inceptors.

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The wonderful Evans Gambit attack which has ever in its manifold branches continued so intensely popular, had been invented by Capt. W. D. Evans, in 1830.

It was played 23 times, the attack won 15, the defence 5, and 3 were drawn.

The Belfast amateur gained considerably in form in the latter stages and at the conclusion, whether in brilliancy or depth, there was not much to choose between them, though the great French professional would seem to have been the more rapid player.

McDonnell died on the 14th September, 1834, aged 37, and La Bourdonnais on the 13th December, 1840, aged 43, being about five years before the appearance in the chess arena of the writer of this article, and who now, owing to the hospitality and liberality of Belfast has the honour and pleasure of taking part in a national British competition in the native place of one who so greatly contributed to the pioneering of these interesting tests of skill.

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NOTE. The match between La Bourdonnais and McDonnell produced games which for originality, enterprise and spirit have never been surpassed. They commanded the admiration and enthusiasm of all lovers of chess at the time, besides securing press notice and arousing a taste for its practice, and a genuine emulation never witnessed before this great example, and the appreciation of the games is now as great as ever, and few modern matches can bear comparison with them.

Different versions of the score have appeared; it was probably finally La Bourdonnais 43, McDonnell 29, and draws 13.

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The Chess Congress of the North of Ireland, which will sound yet more familiar to many ears, under the title of the Belfast or Belfast and Holywood Chess Congress (for it is to the spirit and liberality of these two places that the meeting owes its origin) commenced in the Central Hall, Belfast, on September 12th, and concluded with one of Mr. Blackburne's marvellous blindfold performances on September 24th, an ordinary simultaneous competition of twenty-one games by Mr. Bird, on September 21st, having also apparently afforded some pleasure and satisfaction.

The Belfast meeting must, owing to the originality and enterprise of its conception, and the complete success which has attended it form a unique item in Great Britain's local chess records, and will not form one of the least interesting and significant features in the national chess history of this generation, for it is the first occasion in the record of the forty-eight counties gatherings held since the first of 1841, in Leeds, that the idea has been conceived of adding a contest between the greatest living masters in the country on terms the most liberal and deeply appreciated.

The proceedings of the Congress, and the scores of the players in the Tournaments have been reported from day to day in the Belfast papers, and the games of the masters with some selected from the amateur handicaps have also been given, and save that the same have been presented without comment on the merits of the play, description, or notes which are found so useful and acceptable to the general reader, otherwise considered, from a purely local point of view, nothing remained to be desired. From a national chess point of view, however, it seems to have been too lightly regarded by the Press, some trophy in the amateur competitions to commemorate the name of Alexander McDonnell, a native of Belfast, who did more in his time than any other man to uphold British chess reputation, might also not have been inappropriate on such an occasion. Personally I was surprised that the name of McDonnell did not appear to be more vividly remembered in his native city.

It seems desirable, if not indeed absolutely necessary before describing the games contested by the four masters, Blackburne, Bird, Lee, and Mason, to say a few words about the original inception of the great matches in which it was at one time proposed that two other eminent players, not British born should participate, but who at the last moment sought certain undue advantages beyond the very liberal bonuses provided, and even a controlling influence never anticipated by the committee, and to which of course it could not, with any full sense of propriety or regard to originally avowed intentions and subscribers views consent.

Asking pardon for a slight digression I will first say a word or two about the absentees in not an ill-natured way before coming to the essence of the play.

It so happens that during the past few years the countries that furnished us with visits from the chivalrous Anderssen, the hospitable and princely Kolisch, the distinguished and retiring Szen, the singularly modest Paulsen, the courteous and gallant Lowenthal, the amiable, unassuming, and as some think incomparable Zukertort, and the genuine and in many respects greatest of all chess artists, Steinitz, have also domiciled

## Chess History and Reminiscences

with us two more recent additions of chess experts, who arrived at the age when chess players most excel, and playing under conditions of time and clocks most favourable to them have each in turn achieved such remarkable successes, that native players have retired entirely to the shade, and a forty year Bird (competitor of Buckle, Staunton, Anderssen, Morphy and Steinitz, and still the most successful representative of the rapid amusement school), and a thirty year Blackburne, perhaps the greatest all round chess genius who ever lived fade into significance before these foreign champions who, with the most commendable energy, combined with unbounded confidence and assurance, attempt to, and well nigh succeed in placing chess influence at their feet with a Boss the shows determination openly and unequivocally expressed. The control of most of the London chess columns, and a large number of the Provincial is also in foreign hands and proves a very powerful weapon in advancing personal interests.

NOTE. The chess of the Daily News, Evening News and Post, Standard, Field, and Telegraph and nearly all the Provincial papers are conducted by German players. No leading British player has a regular chess column.

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Gunsberg, the elder of the two (slightly it is feared on the wane though still champion of many columns) and Lasker twenty-four years of age, still at his height, are both wonderful performers, and enjoy a vast popularity among their race, and in certain circles, but in the long run it is not unlikely that either will feel extremely dissatisfied if he can maintain for half the time the sustained reputation of the oldest English players who so contentedly and modestly at present occupy their retired back seats, and there are not wanting reasons to believe that both Gunsberg and Lasker became most anxious to enter for the prizes in the Belfast competition at the very time when it was finally determined to confine it to four leading national representatives.

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### NORTH OF IRELAND (BELFAST) CHESS CONGRESS, MASTERS' COMPETITION.

The proceedings opened at the Central Hall, Rosemary Street, Belfast, on Monday, with an admirable address from Dr. Barnett, who wished the players a happy and harmonious time and extended to them a hearty welcome.

No.1. Bird against Blackburne offered an Evans Gambit. This game was the only one played without clocks; both players seemed at ease, and glad to be free from the formality and encumbrance of time regulators and it is a happy omen that it proved one of the most interesting in the programme:

The following is the complete list of the masters' games:

J. H. Blackburne, H. E. Bird, T. J. Lee, and J. Mason

1 Bird Blackburne Evans declined 64 moves Drawn 2 Lee Mason Petroff 75 " Mason 3 Bird Lee Queens Pawn counter 47 " Drawn 4 Blackburne Mason Vienna 44 " Blackburne 5 Lee Blackburne Kt KB3 PQ4 48 " Blackburne 6 Mason Bird KP and QP 62 " Mason 7 Blackburne Bird Ruy Lopez Kt Q5 47 " Bird 8 Mason Lee KP and QP 18 " Drawn 9 Lee Bird PQ4 37 " Bird 10 Mason Blackburne Ruy Lopez 28 " Draw 11 Blackburne Lee Ruy Lopez 43 " Blackburne 12 Bird Mason Two Knights Def 38 " Mason 13 Lee Mason Kt KB3 PKB4 35 " Mason 14 Bird Blackburne KP1 KPB2 42 " Draw 15 Bird Lee KP one 73 " Draw 16 Blackburne Mason Giuoco Piano 30 " Draw 17 Mason Bird Sicilian 27 " Bird 18 Lee Blackburne Four Kts 20 " Draw

## Chess History and Reminiscences

No.1 is the best and most instructive; No.17 was the most lively and entertaining. Of the eight draws, two are legitimate, the other six being unworthy the name of games.

That Lee when out of the running, directed a care and energy against Bird which he did not against Blackburne and Mason will be readily observable by a comparison of the games, especially No. 9, 15, and 18; in the last he indeed made no attempt to win at all, and a draw is the utmost he seems ever to have hoped for in the other.

In the final score Bird, Blackburne and Mason were even in their play, but Bird only scored 2 out of 3 with Lee, whilst the others gained 2 1/2 out of 3 against him, this difference of half a game placed Bird third only.

The two last games, the 17th and 18th, were finished about the same time; thus, when Bird had won from Mason (doing his best in a game which in no way effected his position) Blackburne and Lee agreed to draw, which was a disappointment to the spectators, and of course, to Bird, who was entitled to, and would have liked to have seen the game played out.

These games present a very striking contrast. We particularly commend the last, and the other draw to the consideration of all who would wish to see chess continued as a noble and worthy game. Bird by consenting to a draw with Mason could at once have given him the first prize.

No.17.

Game played in the Masters' Tournament, 23rd September, 1892, between Messrs. James Mason and H. E. Bird:

White	Black
MASON	H. E. BIRD
1 P to K4	P to QB4
2 Kt to KB3	Kt to QB3
3 P to Q4	P takes P
4 Kt takes P	P to Q3
5 Kt to QB3	B to Q2
6 Kt takes Kt	B takes Kt
7 B to Q3	P to K3
8 Castles	P to KKt3
9 P to B4	P to KR4
10 P to B5	Kt P takes P
11 P takes P	Q to Kt3 ch
12 K to R square	Castles
13 P takes P	P takes P
14 Q to K2	P to K4
15 B to K4	Kt to K2
16 B to Kt5	P to Q4
17 B takes Kt	B takes B
18 B to B5 ch	K to Kt square
19 P to QKt3	P to K5
20 Kt to R4	Q to B2
21 P to B4	Q to K4
22 P takes P	B to Q3
23 P to Kt3	B takes P
24 QR to B square	P to K6 ch
25 K to Kt square	QR to KKt square
26 R to B3	B takes R
27 Q takes B	R to KB square

Resigns.

## Chess History and Reminiscences

No.18. Game played in the Masters' Tournament, 23rd September, 1892, between Messrs. F. J. Lee and J. H. Blackburne:

A Contrast.

White	Black
LEE	BLACKBURNE
1 P to K4	P to K4
2 Kt to QB3	Kt to KB3
3 Kt to B3	Kt to B3
4 P to QR3	B to K2
5 P to Q4	P to Q3
6 B to K2	Castles
7 Castles	B to Kt5
8 P to Q5	Kt to Kt square
9 P to R3	B to R4
10 Kt to KR2	B to Kt3
11 B to Q3	QKt to Q2
12 B to K3	Kt to B4
13 P to B3	Kt takes B
14 P takes Kt	Kt to Q2
15 P to KKt4	P to QR3
16 Kt to K2	B to Kt4
17 B to B2	B to R5
18 B to K3	B to Kt4
19 B to B2	B to R5
20 B to K3	B to Kt4

Drawn.

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GAMES AT THE BELFAST CHESS CONGRESS  
IN THE QUADRANGULAR COMPETITION  
BETWEEN

J. H. Blackburne, H. E. Bird, F. J. Lee, and J. Mason,  
Sept. 12th to Sept. 23rd, 1892.

Of the eighteen games competed for by the above, eight are worthy to be placed in a first class collection. They are—No. 1, "Evans Gambit Declined," (Bird v. Blackburne) which is thought in some respects the best, as illustrating the styles and resources of the two players, besides containing many instructive phases. No. 4, "A Vienna Opening," between Blackburne and Mason, was a game of considerable enterprise and interest, though the latter missed an ingenious and promising opportunity, which would have given him a considerable advantage, sufficient for so careful and reliable a player (who seldom misses chances) to have won. No. 7, a Kt to Q5 defence to the Ruy Lopez) a form not approved by the authorities, condemned once more by Mr. Hoffer, in the Field, but passed without comment by Mr. Mason in the B. C. M.) was a popular game with the spectators and was won by Bird, defending against Blackburne, who also succeeded in No. 17 on the last day against Mason with a Sicilian in a short and decisive game, pleasing and amusing to the lookers on who liked to see a lively and decisive game. No. 9, "A Queen's Pawn opening" produced fine combinations and critical positions and a brilliant finish (Bird scoring from Lee). No. 11, "A Two Knight's Defence" terminated in a clever and meritorious victory for Mason as second player over Bird.

The above six games were the most entertaining of the series, viz.—1, 4, 7, 9, 11 17.

No. 5 Lee and Blackburne, Kt to KB3, and No. 12, Blackburne and Lee, a Ruy Lopez were steady, but rather dull, but furnished excellent specimens of Blackburne's skill and masterly conduct of end games.

## Chess History and Reminiscences

Next to the foregoing eight games in order of interest were No. 3, Bird and Lee. Counter Queen's Pawn opening and No. 13, Bird and Blackburne KP one, these, though both drawn, were steady, well-played and instructive games. In No. 2, Lee and Mason, a Petroff, the former should have drawn, but lost on his 75th move. In No. 6, Mason was at a decided disadvantage with Bird who committed an ingenious suicide in a game he could have drawn.

In No. 13, a Kt to KB3 opening, P KB4 reply. Lee had much the better game with a Pawn more against Mason, but made a palpable blunder at his 34th move and resigned.

No. 8, a tame draw in 18 moves, Mason and Lee 10, Mason and Blackburne, 28 moves, not much better 16, Blackburne and Mason 30 moves, of no interest, and No. 18, the last game 20 moves between Lee and Blackburne, from which something was expected, but which baffles polite description, and cannot be dignified by the name of, or as a game, completes the list. This was a Four Knights game, 15 Blackburne and Mason a Giuoco Piano 30 moves was a lamentable specimen of wood shifting.

The following game presented some very instructive positions towards the close:

Game played in the Masters' Tournament, 16th September, 1892, between Messrs. H. E. Bird and F. J. Lee.

White	Black
LEE	BIRD
1 P to Q4	P to Q4
2 Kt to KB3	P to K3
3 P to B4	Kt to KB3
4 P to K3	QKt to Q2
5 B to Q3	B to K2
6 Kt to B3	Castles
7 Castles	R to K square
8 P to QKt3	P to B3
9 B to Kt2	B to Q3
10 Q to B2	P takes P
11 P takes P	B to Kt square
12 Kt to K2	Q to R4
13 P to B5	P to K4
14 B to B3	Q to Q square
15 Kt to Kt3	P takes P
16 B takes P	Kt to K4
17 B takes Kt	B takes B
18 Kt takes B	R takes Kt
19 KR to Q square	Q to K2
20 QR to B square	B to Kt5
21 P to B3	B to K3
22 R to K square	P to KKt3
23 P to B4	R to Q4
24 P to K4	R to Q5
25 P to B5	QR to Q square!
26 P to K5!	Kt to Kt5
27 P takes B	R takes B
28 P takes P ch	Q takes P
29 Kt to K4	Q to KB5
30 Q to QB4 ch	K to Kt2
31 P to KKt3	Q to R3
32 R to B2	R to Q8. Good
33 Q to K2	R takes R ch
34 Q takes R	Q to K6 ch
35 K to B square	Q to KB6 ch
36 R to KB2	Q to R8 ch
37 K to K2	Q takes K8 ch



## Chess History and Reminiscences

Resigns.

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THE NORTH OF IRELAND (Belfast Holywood) CHESS CONGRESS  
MASTERS QUADRANGULAR OOMPETITION.  
H. E. Bird, J. H. Blackburne, F. Lee, and J. Mason.

### FIRST ROUND.

September 12--Blackburne drew with Bird, Lee v. Mason adjourned after forty-two moves. Resumed on Thursday, Mason won.

September 13--Bird drew with Lee, Blackburne beat Mason.

September 14--Blackburne beat Lee, Mason beat Bird.

### SECOND ROUND.

September 15--Bird beat Blackburne, Lee drew with Mason.

September 16--Bird beat Lee; Blackburne drew with Mason.

September 19--Bird lost to Mason, Blackburne beat Lee.

### THIRD ROUND.

September 20--Bird drew to Blackburne, Lee lost to Mason.

September 22--Bird drew with Lee, Blackburne drew with Mason.

September 23--Bird beat Mason, Blackburne v. Lee, drawn.

Blackburne won 2 out of 3 from Mason.  
Mason " 2 " 3 " Bird.  
Bird " 2 " 3 " Blackburne.  
These three scores being equal.

Blackburne and Mason each won 2 1/2 out of 3 with Lee, but Bird only 2 out of 3.

Final score--J. H. Blackburne... ..	5 1/2
J. Mason ... ..	5 1/2
H. E. Bird ... ..	5
F. J. Lee ... ..	2
	-----
	18

GAME No. 7.--RUY LOPEZ ATTACK. Kt to Queen's fifth Defence (Bird.) Note. This defence is condemned by all authorities. The following was considered the game of the Tournament and must be admired:

White	Black	White	Black
BLACKBURNE	BIRD	BLACKBURNE	BIRD
1 P to K4	P to K4	25 P takes P	B to B5

NATIONAL CHESS.

## Chess History and Reminiscences

2 Kt to KB3	QKt to B3	26 B to K2	B takes B
3 B to Kt5	Kt to Q5	27 R takes B	P to Q4
4 Kt takes Kt	P takes Kt	28 P takes P	R takes R
5 P to Q3	P to KR4	29 Kt takes R	P takes P
6 P to QB3	B to B4	30 Kt to Q4	R to K square
7 Castles	P to QB3	31 P to B5	R to K5
8 B to R4	P to Q3	32 Kt to K6 ch	K to Q3
9 Q to K square	Q to B3	33 Kt to Kt7	R takes P
10 K to R square	Kt to R3	34 P to B6	Kt to B2
11 P to KB3	P to R5	35 Kt to B5 ch	K to K4
12 B to B2	B to Q2	36 Kt takes P	P to Q5
13 P takes P	B takes P	37 Kt to Kt6 ch	K to K5
14 Kt to B3	Castles QR	38 K to Kt square	R to Kt7
15 B to K3	QR to K square	39 P to KR4	P takes P en pas
16 B takes B	Q takes B	40 P takes P	P to Q6
17 Q to B2	Q takes Q	41 R to K square ch	K to B4
18 R takes Q	P to KKt4	42 Kt to K7 ch	K takes P
19 P to QKt4	P to KB4	43 Kt to Q5 ch	K to B4
20 R to K2	P to Kt5	44 Kt to K3 ch	K to Kt3
21 P to KB4	KR to B square	45 Kt to B4	R takes P
22 R to KB square	K to B2	46 R to Q square	P to Kt4
23 B to Q square	B to K3	47 Kt to Q2	Kt to Kt4
24 R to QB2	P takes P	48 K to B square	Kt takes P

Mr. Blackburne might as the annotators observe well have resigned here, he did so on the 73rd move.

This was also a game of great interest which Black should have been contented to draw after his ill-judged and fanciful 29th move had destroyed his chance of winning.

White MASON	Black BIRD	White MASON	Black BIRD
1 P to K4	P to Q4	16 B takes Kt	Q takes B
2 P takes P	Q takes P	17 P to QKt4	P to QR4
3 Kt to QB3	Q to Q square	18 Kt to B2	P takes P
4 P to Q4	P to KKt3	19 Kt takes P	Q to Q3
5 B to KB4	B to Kt2	20 Q to K2	P to QB4
6 Kt to Kt5	Kt to QR3	21 P takes P	Q takes P
7 P to QB3	P to QB3	22 QR to QB square	QR to Q square
8 Kt to R3	Kt to B2	23 KR to Q square	Q to R4
9 Kt to B3	Kt to B3	24 B to K3	R takes R ch
10 P to KR3	KKt to Q4	25 Q takes R	R to Q square
11 B to Q2	Castles	26 Kt to Q4	Q to K4
12 B to Q3	R to K square	27 Q to K square	Kt takes Kt
13 Castles	Kt to K3	28 P takes Kt	Q to K5
14 R to K square	P to QKt4	29 P to KB3	Q takes B ch
15 B to K4	B to QKt2	30 Q takes Q	B takes P

Mason played the opening of this the following game with spirit and originality, but missed advantageous opportunities at moves 14 and 18, and Blackburne remaining with a superior position and Pawn more won easily in the end game.

White BLACKBURNE	Black MASON	White BLACKBURNE	Black MASON
1 P to K4	P to K4	11 QKt to B4	B to R3 ch
2 Kt to QB3	Kt to KB3	12 P to Q3	QR to K square
3 P to B4	P to Q4	13 P to KKt3	Q to Kt5
4 BP takes P	Kt takes P	14 K to Kt2	R takes P
5 Q to B3	P to KB4	15 P takes Kt	Q takes Q ch
6 Kt to R3	Kt to QB3	16 K takes Q	P takes P ch
7 B to Kt5	Q to R5 ch	17 K to Kt2	P to Kt4

## Chess History and Reminiscences

8 K to B	B to B4	18 Kt takes P	R takes Kt
9 Kt takes P	Castles	19 Kt to R3	R to Kt3
10 B takes Kt	P takes B	20 B to B4	B to K7

White BIRD	Black LEE	White BIRD	Black LEE
1 P to K3	P to K4	31 P to R3	R to KB2
2 P to QKt3	P to Q4	32 K to R2	Q to Q
3 B to Kt2	B to Q3	33 R to QB	P to QR4
4 Kt to KB3	Q to K2	34 R to KKt	P takes P
5 P to B4	P to QB3	35 P takes P	Q to K2
6 P takes P	P takes P	36 B to B5	Q to Q
7 Kt to B3	Kt to KB3	37 B to Q4	Q to K2
8 Kt to Kt5	Kt to B3	38 B to B3	B to R3
9 Kt takes B ch	Q takes Kt	39 Q to R3	B to K7
10 B to Kt5	P to K5	40 P to KKt5	BP takes P
11 Kt to K5	Castles	41 P takes P	P to Q5
12 B takes Kt	P takes B	42 B takes P	R takes B
13 R to QB	B to Kt2	43 P takes R	P takes P
14 Castles	Kt to Q2	44 R to B2	P to Kt5
15 P to B4	Kt takes Kt	45 Q to Kt3	B to B6
16 B takes Kt	Q to K2	46 R to QR	R takes P
17 B to Q4	KR to K	47 R to R8 ch	K to R2
18 Q to Kt4	P to B3	48 K to Kt	Q takes P
19 R to B5	P to QR3	49 Q to R4 ch	K to Kt3
20 KR to QB	QR to B	50 R to KR8	P to Kt6
21 P to B5	K to R	51 Q to R7 ch	K to B3
22 R to KB	R to B2	52 Q to R4 ch	K to Kt3
23 R to KB4	Q to B2	53 Q to R7 ch	K to B3
24 Q to R3	R to KB	54 Q to R4 ch	K to Kt3
25 P to KKt4	K to Kt	55 Q to R7 ch	K to B3
26 Q to Kt3	P to R3	56 Q to R4 ch	R to Kt4
27 P to Kt4	R to Q2	57 Q to B4 ch	K to Kt3
28 R to QB	R to QR	58 R takes B	P takes R
29 P to KR4	Q to K2	59 Q to K4 ch	R to B4
30 R to B5	R to KB	60 Q to K6 ch	R to B3

Lee for once in this Tournament worked his very hardest and his 41st move was of the highest order. Bird's attack seemed irresistible.

And the game was drawn after 73 moves.

The games in the amateur competitions for spirit and liveliness contrasted in many instances with some in the Masters' Tournament, and we would gladly have given a larger selection of them had they reached us a little earlier.

The proceedings of the North of Ireland Congress and its play were worthy of a special work.

White	Black	White	Black
R. S. GAMBLE	R. BOYD	R. S. GAMBLE	R. BOYD
1 P to K4	P to K4	19 P to Q5	P to QB4
2 Kt to KB3	Kt to QB3	20 R to K4	P to B3
3 B to QKt5	B to B4	21 B to B4	QR to K square
4 P to QB3	Kt to KB3	22 QR to K square	P to KKt4
5 P to Q4	P takes P	23 B to R2	K to R square
6 P to K5	Kt to KKt5	24 P to KKt4	Kt to R5
7 P takes P	B to QKt3	25 Kt takes Kt	P takes Kt
8 Castles	Castles	26 Q to R6	B to Q square
9 P to KR3	Kt to KR3	27 R to K6	B to Kt2
10 B to K3	Kt to KB4	28 Q to R5	B to K2

## Chess History and Reminiscences

11 Q to Q3	P to Q3	29 Q to KB5	B to Q square
12 B takes Kt	P takes B	30 B takes P	R to Kt square
13 B to Kt5	Q to Q2	31 Kt to K4	B to B square
14 P takes P	P takes P	32 Kt takes P	R takes R
15 Kt to QB3	P to QR4	33 R takes R	Q to KB2
16 R to K square	B to QKt2	34 B to K5	B to B2
17 P to Kt3	B to R3	35 Kt takes R ch	B takes B
18 Q to Q2	B to B2		

and wins.

White	Black
R. A. WILLIAMS	LT. COL. CHALLICE
1 P to K4	P to Q4
2 P takes P	Q takes P
3 Kt to QB3	Q to Q square
4 P to Q4	Kt to KB3
5 B to K2	B to B4
6 B to K3	P to K3
7 P to QR3	B to K2
8 Kt to KB3	Castles
9 Kt to K5	Kt to K5
10 B to B3	Kt takes Kt
11 P takes Kt	P to QB3
12 P to Kt4	B to Kt3
13 Q to Q2	Q to B2
14 P to KR4	P to KR3
15 P to R5	B to R2
16 P to Kt5	P takes P
17 KR to Kt	B to Q3
18 Kt to Q3	P to B3
19 K to K2	Kt to Q2
20 R to Kt2	QR to K1
21 P to R6	P take P
22 QR to R square	K to Kt2
23 R takes P	K takes R
24 B take P ch	

and mates in three moves.

Game played in the Championship Tournament (Tie) between Messrs. E. A. Robinson and W. L. Harvey, September 27th, 1892:

White	Black
W. L. HARVEY	E. A. ROBINSON
1 P to K4	P to K4
2 Kt to KB3	Kt to QB3
3 B to Kt5	Kt to KB3
4 P to Q3	P to Q3
5 P to B3	P to QR3
6 B to R4	B to Q2
7 Kt to Q2	P to Kt3
8 Kt to B square	

Steinitz favours this continuation, which however is considered to lose time for White's attack.

8	B to Kt2
9 B to B2	Kt to K2
10 B to K3	

10 B to Kt5 at once seems to be much better.

## Chess History and Reminiscences

10	Kt to Kt5
11 B to Kt5	P to KB3
12 B to R4	B to K3
13 P to KR3	Kt to R3
14 Q to Q2	Kt to B2
15 Kt to K3	Q to Q2
16 P to Q4	P to B3
17 P to Q5	

17 P to QB4 is preferable at this point.

17	P takes P
18 P takes P	B to B4
19 B takes B	

Turning the chances in favour of Black. If 19 Kt takes B, leaving Bishops of different colours, there is all appearance of a draw.

19	Kt takes B
20 P to Kt4	Kt takes B
21 Kt takes Kt	Kt to Kt4
22 Q to K2 (one hour)	Castles KR
23 Castles QR	P to QKt4
24 Kt (on R4) to Kt2	Q to QB2
25 P to KR4	Kt to B2
26 P to R5	P to Kt4
27 Kt to B5	

Threatening trouble by P to R6, followed by Kt to Kt7,

27	P to R3
28 Q to K4 (!)	Kt to Q square
29 Kt (on Kt2) to K3	Kt to Kt2
30 Kt takes B	Q takes Kt
31 Q to Kt6	

The position here bristles with interest. Examination will show that Black is in more serious danger than lies on the surface.

31	P to KB4
32 Kt takes P	R takes Kt

Judiciously giving up the exchange and Pawn to escape the fatal attack threatened on Rook's file.

33 P takes R	R to B square
34 R to R2	R to B3
35 Q to K8 ch	K to R2
36 P to KB4	Kts P takes P
37 R (on R2!) to R square	

The other R to R square, doubling, seems much stronger. If then R x P, 38 Q to Kt6 ch! From this point White plays a weak game.

37	R takes P
38 Q to Kt6 ch	Q takes Q
39 P takes Q ch	K takes P
40 P to QKt4	P to K5

## Chess History and Reminiscences

41 R (Q sq) to Kt sq ch R interposes  
42 K to Q2 Kt to Q square  
43 R takes R ch P takes R  
44 R to R8

After this it is only a matter of time. The Pawns cannot be stopped.

44 Kt to B2  
45 R to Kt8 ch K to R2  
46 R to K8 P to K6 ch  
47 K to K2 K to Kt3  
48 R to K6 ch K to B4  
49 R to K7 Kt to K4  
50 R to K8 P to Kt5  
51 R to B8 ch

Driving him where he wants to go!

51 K to K5  
52 R to B6 P to B6 ch  
53 K to Q sq P to Kt6  
54 R to B8 P to Kt7  
55 R to Kt8 P to B7

Resigns.

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### BLINDFOLD CHESS

The Arabs are the first we read of among the people of the East who excelled in playing chess without seeing the board. The introduction to one of Dr. Lee's manuscripts in his Oriental collection, relates examples of the early Mohammedan doctors, and even of companions and followers of the Prophet, who either themselves played chess or were spectators of the game. Some of them also are said to have played behind their back, i.e. without looking at the board, and it may not be generally known that the manuscript in the British Museum 16,856 copied in 1612, which is a translation and abridgment of an older work in Arabic, contains a full chapter with a lengthy description, combined with maxims and advice for playing chess without seeing the board. Al Suli, who died A.D. 946, and Ali Shatranji, at Timur's Court, 1377 A.D. (the chess giants of their respective ages), were each highly proficient in Blindfold Chess. A man named Buzecca, in 1266, on the invitation of Guido du Novelli, the friend and munificent patron of Dante, and who was Master of Ravenna, gave an exhibition of his powers at Florence, which occasioned much surprise and admiration.

The unknown author of the famous and unique manuscript, bequeathed by Major Price, the eminent Orientalist, to the Asiatic Society, which has formed the subject of so much discussion among the learned, parades his own chess prowess, in a manner not unworthy of some great chess exponents of the present age. "And many a one," he says in his preface, "has experienced a relief from sorrow and affliction in consequence of this magic recreation"; and this same fact has been asserted by the celebrated physician Muhammad Zakaria Razi, in his book entitled: "The Essence of Things": "And such is likewise the opinion of the physician Ali Bin Firdaus, as I shall notice more fully towards the end of the present works, for the composing of which I am in the hope of receiving my reward from God, who is Most High and Most Glorious."

The philosopher continues: "I have passed my life since the age of fifteen years among all the masters of chess living in my time, and since that period till now, when I have arrived at middle age, I have travelled

through Irak Arab, and Irak Ajam, and Khurasan, and the regions of Mawara al Nahr (Transoxania), and I have there met with many a master in this art, and I have played with all of them, and through the favour of Him who is Adorable and Most High I come off victorious."

"Likewise in playing without seeing the board I have overcome most opponents, nor had they the power to cope with me. I the humble sinner now addressing you, have frequently played with one opponent over the board and at the same time I have carried on four different games, with as many adversaries, without seeing the board, whilst I conversed freely with my friends all along, and through the Divine favour I conquered them all. Also in the great chess, I have invented sundry positions as well as several openings, which no one else ever imagined or contrived."

Notwithstanding the accounts and allusions to Blindfold Chess here referred to, it would seem to have been generally unknown to us at the time when Philidor performed his intellectual feat of playing two games blindfold, and one over the board, on several occasions at the St. James Street Chess Club, about a century ago. The club which was held at Parsloes Hotel, was formed in 1770, and its members comprised many prominent, celebrated, and distinguished men: Pitt, Earl of Chatham, C. J. Fox, Rockingham, St. John, Mansfield, Wedderburn, Sir G. Elliott, and other well-known names are recorded among the visitors and spectators there. Whilst the players who contended against Philidor at the slightest shade of odds included Sir Abraham Janssens, the Hon. Henry Conway, Count Bruhl, Mr. George Atwood (mathematician and one of Pitt's financial secretaries), Dr. Black, the Rev. Mr. Boudler, and Mr. Cotter. Stamma, of Aleppo, engaged in London on works of translation, and who was one of the best chess players, was matched against Philidor, but won only one out of eight games. These contests took place at Slaughter's Coffee House, in St. Martin's Lane, long a principal meeting place for leading chess players. Philidor does not seem to have tried more than two games blindfold, but such was the astonishment they caused at the time, that doubts were expressed whether such an intellectual feat would ever be repeated; and certainly from the tenor of press notices of the event, and Philidor's own memoranda, it seems that it could not have been contemplated or conceived that performances on the scale we have witnessed in our days by Louis Paulsen, 1; Paul Morphy, 2; J. H. Blackburne, 3; and Dr. J. H. Zukertort, 4, would become, comparatively speaking, so common in a future generation. The following article, from a newspaper of the period, was thought to reflect with tolerable accuracy the general impression prevailing at the time in regard to these performances.

The World, a London newspaper in its issue of the 28th May, 1783, makes the following remarks upon Philidor's performance of playing two games simultaneously without sight of the board. It scarcely, however, comes up to our American cousin's views of Morphy in 1858, just three-quarters of a century later. It says: "This brief article is the record of more than sport and fashion, it is a phenomenon in the history of man and so should be hoarded among the best samples of human memory, till memory shall be no more. The ability of fixing on the mind the entire plan of two chess tables without seeing either, with the multiplied vicissitudes of two and thirty pieces in possible employment on each table, is a wonder of such magnitude as could not be credible without repeated experience of the fact."

Philidor himself notes also, being of opinion that an entire collection of the games he has played without looking over the chess board would not be of any service to amateurs, he will only publish a few parties which he has played against three players at once, subjoining the names of his respectable adversaries in order to prove and transmit to posterity a fact of which future ages might otherwise entertain some doubt.

During the years 1855–6 and 7, Louis Paulsen at Chicago, and other cities in the west of America, first accomplished the feat of playing ten games at chess simultaneously, without seeing the board or pieces, now familiarly called Blindfold Chess; and at Bristol, in 1861, and at Simpson's Divan, London, in the same year, he repeated the performance, on the last occasion meeting twelve very powerful opponents.

The phenomenon Paul Morphy, from New Orleans, when twenty years of age only, conducted eight games

blindfold at Birmingham, in August, 1858, losing one to Dr. Salmon of Dublin, drawing with Mr. Alderman Thomas Avery, and winning the remaining six. Morphy at Paris, in March, 1859, repeated the performance, and won all eight games; his play was superb, and all agree has never been surpassed, if equalled, and drew forth press notice even more gushing than that bestowed upon his predecessor Philidor.

J. H. Blackburne appeared in 1862, and with Louis Paulsen, the pioneer of the art upon the extended scale, was engaged by the British Chess Association at their International Gathering, in 1862, to give blindfold exhibitions; each played ten games with great success, amid much appreciation. Mr. Blackburne's subsequent thirty years blindfold chess is too well known to require comment, he is admitted to be second to none in the exposition of the art, some even claim superiority for him over all others.

Dr. Zukertort, on the 21st December, 1876, at the St. George's Chess Club, contended blindfold with sixteen competitors, comprising the best players that could be found to oppose him. From a physiological point of view Zukertort's powers appear the most extraordinary, because his abstraction for chess was far less pronounced, and his mind seemed to be of a more varied and even discursive kind. It would scarcely have been less surprising to have seen players like Staunton, Buckle, or Der Lasa performing blindfold chess.

The number of players of all grades of chess force who now can play without seeing the board is amazing; a tournament for blindfold play only could well be held. The faculty of playing chess blindfold is thought to apply mostly to those who have extraordinary retentive memories of a peculiar kind, and great powers of abstraction very slightly brought into action or diverted by other pursuits. This seems to be confirmed in considering the great chess exponents who have played blindfold, and those who have not, a comparison has been adduced but which might seem invidious to expatiate on.

NOTE. Sachieri, a Jesuit of Turin, who lived in the 17th century, had a most surprising memory. He could play at chess with three different persons without seeing one of the three boards, his representative only telling him every move of the adversary. Sachieri would direct him what man to play, and converse with company all the time. If there happened a dispute about the place of a man, he could repeat every move made by both parties from the beginning of the game, in order to ascertain where the man ought to stand. He could deliver a sermon an hour long in the same words and order in which he heard it. This is very remarkable, as the Italian sermons are unmethodical and unconnected, and full of sentences and maxims.

Blackburne does the same. At one of the few blindfold performances I have witnessed by him, viz., at Montreal, in 1889, during our adjournment to dinner the positions had become disarranged, but Blackburne on resumption called over all the eight games, with great facility, and perfect accuracy, the resumption being delayed not more than five minutes.

The Razi referred to above (called by our medieval writers Rhasis) was a celebrated physician of Bagdad, where he died about A.D. 922.

The Author of the British Museum M.S. says:

"Some men from long practice, have arrived at such a degree of perfection in this art, as to have played blindfold at four or five boards at one and the same time, and never to have committed a mistake in any of the games." He further tells us that—"some have been known to have recited poetry, or told amusing stories, or conversed with the company present, during the progress of the contest." In another sentence he says—"I have seen it written in a book, that one man played blindfold at ten boards simultaneously, and gained all the games; he even corrected many errors committed by his opponents and friends, in describing the moves.

It was a saying in the East, "He plays at chess like Al Suli." So that many believed him to be the inventor of this game, but erroneously.



The Arabians say that a certain great man showed one of his friends his garden, full of fine flowers, and said to him, "Did you ever see a finer sight than this? Yes," he replied, "Al Suli's game at chess is more beautiful than this garden and everything that is in it."

Al Suli died A. D. 946.

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The writer is not enamoured of blindfold play, preferring not to attempt to do that without his eyes, which he can do better with. "Blindfold Play" the term used nowadays, or "playing behind your back," as one of the old Arabian manuscripts has it, seems not the most happy expression for the art, playing "Sans Voir" or without sight of chess board or pieces clearly expresses it. Good players, actually blind, may be mentioned, the writer has played with such, in a simultaneous exhibition of chess play at Sheffield, a game against two blind boys from the Asylum, proved one of the best contested and most interesting in the series, and these bright but afflicted lads evidently, with their kind attendant, derived the greatest pleasure from the meeting.

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### THE GAME OF CHESS

Elaborate and learned works have appeared treating on the supposed origin of chess. Oriental manuscripts, Eastern fables, and the early poets have been quoted to prove its antiquity, and it would not be easy to name any subject upon which so much valuable labour and antiquarian research has been bestowed, with so little harmonious or agreed result as to opinions concerning the first source of this wonderful game.

That chess reached Persia from India in the first half of the Sixth century, during the reign of Chosroes, is well attested, and concurred in by all historians from the Arabian and Persian writers, the beautiful and accomplished Greek Princess Anna Comnena, and the Asiatic Society's famous manuscript to Dr. Hyde and Sir William Jones, and Sir Frederick Madden and Professor Duncan Forbes, China, also, admits the receipt of chess from India in the year 537, and got it about the same time as Persia.

Whatever difference of opinion may exist as to the exact spot from whence chess first sprung, its Asiatic origin is undoubted. The elephant, ship, or boat in the game was illustrative of its mode of warfare. The identity of the pieces in the ancient game with ours of the present day affords striking confirmation of it, whilst the most competent and esteemed authorities who have devoted the greatest attention and research to the subject deem the evidence of language conclusive proof that the Persian Chatrang, which we first hear of under date of about 540 A.D., was derived from the ancient Hindu Chaturanga, found described in original Sanskrit records.

It is generally assumed on very fair inferences that the Arabians were expert chess players, and also excelled in blindfold play. The game was known among them in the days of the prophet, 590 to 632, who finding some engaged at chess asked them, "What images are these which you are so intent upon?" For they seemed to have been new to him, the game having been very lately introduced into Arabia from Persia. Nice gradations of skill were observed among them, and thirteen degrees of odds are enumerated among them down to the rook. To give any odds beyond the rook, says one of the manuscripts, can apply only to women, children, and tyros. For instance, a man to whom even a first-class player can afford to give the odds of a rook and a knight has no claim to be ranked among chess players. In fact the two rooks in chess are like the two hands in the human body, and the two knights are, as it were, the feet. Now that man has very little to boast of on the score of manhood and valour who tells you that he has given a sound thrashing to another man who had only one hand and one foot. It may be observed, however, that proportionately to the value of all the pieces in the old game, as compared with the present, the rook and knight would be equivalent to queen and

rook with us.

The earliest Greek reference brought to notice is in a laconic correspondence between the Emperor Nicephorus of Constantinople, successor to the Princess Irene, and the famous Harun Ar Rashid of Bagdad, the fifth of the Abbasside dynasty, in 802, which mentions Pawn and Rook, implying that his predecessor in paying tribute resembled rather the former for weakness than the latter for strength; but it had probably been known among the Greeks before the death of Justinian, in 565, as he was contemporary with Chosroes, and these rulers were at peace and in friendly terms of communication, allowing interpretations of their respective records, which seem to have been of mutual interest.

All the writers who assert that the ancient Greeks and Romans were unacquainted with chess have overlooked the Roman edict of 115 B.C., in which both chess and Draughts were specially exempted from prohibition.

Such consideration as can be found devoted to the game or games of the Egyptians mainly relates to hypothesis and conjectures in regard to the inscriptions recorded to have been discovered on tombs and the temples generally, and especially on the wall of the great palace of Medinet Abu at Egyptian Thebes, which, according to the most approved authorities, derived from the scrolls, relates to the time of Ramesses Meiammun the 16th, out of the 17 monarchs of the 18th dynasty, who as is supposed, reigned from 1559 to 1493 B.C., and constructed Medinet Abu, and is pronounced most likely to be the monarch represented on its walls. His title is Ramses, and he is considered to have been the grandfather of Sesostris 1st of the 19th dynasty, whose reign is stated as from 1473 to 1418 B.C.

Some discussion arose in chess circles in 1872 in reference to Mr. Disraeli's mention of chess in one of his books. Chapter 16 of "Alroy" begins—"Two stout soldiers were playing chess in a coffee-house," and Mr. Disraeli inserts on this the following note (80). On the walls of the palace of Amenoph II, called Medinet Abuh, at Egyptian Thebes, the King is represented playing chess with the Queen. This monarch reigned long before the Trojan war.

A writer, who styled himself the author of Fossil Chess, in criticising the above, refers to Sir Gardiner Wilkinson's work, "A popular account of the ancient Egyptians, which declares the game to resemble draughts, the pieces being uniform in pattern." The same critic further remarks, "In the same work may be found some account of the paintings in the tomb of Beni Hassan, presumably the oldest in Egypt, dating back from the time of Osirtasen I, twenty centuries before the Christian era, and eight hundred years anterior to the reign of Rameses III, by whom the temple of Medinet Abuh was commenced, and who is the Rameses portrayed on its walls. An unaccountable error on Mr. Disraeli's part in the same note assigns its erection to Amenoph II, who lived 1414 B.C.

The eminent and revered writer and statesman may not have selected the supposed best authorities for his dates, but the sapient critic indulges in a strange admixture of misconception. However, Egyptian chronology is not fully agreed upon, even Manetho and Herodotus differ some 120 years as to the time of Sesostris, and Bishop Warburton, we read, was highly indignant with a scholar, one Nicholas Man, who argued for the identity of Osiris and Sesostris after he (the bishop) had said they were to be distinguished. Respecting English origin, all authorities down to the end of the Eighteenth century agreed in ascribing the first knowledge of chess to the time of William the Conqueror, or to that of the return of the first Crusaders.

Perhaps, however, it reached us in the days of Charlemagne, and may well have done so through Alcuin of York, his friend and tutor in the reigns of Offa and of Egbert.

Al Walid, 705–715; Harun, 786–809; the great Al Mamun, 813 to 833; and Tamerlane, 1375 to 1400, are monarchs who honoured their chess opponents when beaten. Charlemagne, 768–814, seems also to have

taken defeat good-humouredly, and Queen Elizabeth, who liked chess, philosophised upon it. Canute, William the Conqueror, and Henry the Eighth, like the famous Ras, of Abyssinia, whom Salt and Buckle inform us of, preferred to win.

Chess, as it is now played, came down to us from the Fifteenth century, when the queen of present powers was introduced, and the extensions and improvements in the moves of the bishops and the pawns and in castling effected, and which made the game exactly what it now is. It has been so practised for four hundred years without the slightest deviation or alteration, and with so much continued satisfaction and advanced appreciation that any change or modification suggested, however trifling, has been at once discouraged and rejected, and additions proposed in the 17th century (Carrera), 18th (Duke of Rutland), and 19th (Bird) were regarded with no favour, and the objection that the game was difficult enough already.

During the present century (especially in the second half) chess has become vastly popular. The game is innocent and intellectual, and affords the utmost scope for art and strategy, and for its practice we have about five hundred clubs and institutions, compared with the one club in St. James' Street, and Slaughter's, in St. Martin's Lane, which existed in the last century, during the height of Philidor's career, and two of the first half dozen. Chess clubs started found rest on Irish soil, the first so early as the year 1819.

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PHILIDOR,

BORN 1726, DREUX, NEAR PARIS, DIED 1795, IN LONDON.

Philidor's ascendancy and popularity in the last century, owing to his remarkable and perhaps unprecedented supremacy combined with the liberality of his treatment and the chivalry and enthusiasm of his opponents, tended to create an entirely new era in chess and its support. An interest became aroused of a most important character, unknown in any previous age in England, and which, though not fully maintained after his death, and least of all among the higher classes who ranked so largely among his patrons, was yet destined to have a marked and lasting influence on the future development and progress of the game, most apparent at first in England, but later nearly equally manifested in Germany, since in America and other countries, and not exclusively confined to any country, class, or creed.

Several auspicious circumstances had greatly contributed to aid Philidor in his London career. Prominent among which were his introduction to Lord Sandwich at the Hague. His patronage through the same source by the Duke of Cumberland and the never ceasing liberality of General Conway, the inestimable Count Bruhl, the Dowager Lady Holland, and the gallant Sir Gilbert Elliot of Gibraltar fame.

Of the players who encountered Philidor, Sir Abraham Janssens, who died in 1775, seems to have been the best, Mr. George Atwood, a mathematician, one of Pitt's secretaries came next, he was of a class which we should call third or two grades of odds below Philidor, a high standard of excellence to which but few amateurs attain.

Some indication of the varied and important character of Philidor's patronage is afforded by the names on the cover of his edition of 1777, dedicated to the Duke of Cumberland.

Twenty-six ladies of title grace the list, including the historic chess names of Devonshire, Northumberland, Bedford, Marlborough, Rutland, with upwards of 300 male names comprising heads of the Church, men illustrious at the bar and on the bench, statesmen, politicians, cabinet ministers, and many most distinguished in science, both in England and in France, with a long list of our nobility. Devonshire is the earliest name mentioned in old Chronicles connected with English chess, Olgar or Orgar, Earl of Devonshire is recorded to

## Chess History and Reminiscences

have been playing chess with his daughter Elstreth or Elpida when King Edgar's messenger Athelwold arrived to ascertain the truth of the reports of her extraordinary beauty. Northumberland is mentioned two centuries later as a house in which chess was played. Caxton's "Booke of Chesse," Bruges 1474, said by some to be the first book printed in London, was dedicated to the Duke of Clarence, Rowbotham's, 1561, to the Earl of Leicester, Lucy, Countess of Bedford accepted dedication of A. Saul's quaint work, 1597 and and Barbieri's edition of the same, 1640. The early love poem of Lydgate, emblematical of chess was dedicated to the admirers of the game, and the Duke of Rutland in the last century took sufficient interest in it to devise an extension of chess.

NOTE. The names of the subscribers on Philidor's Analysis of Chess, 1777, include Lord Sandwich and the Duke of Cumberland for 10 and 50 copies respectively.

The Duchess of Argyle, the Duchess of Bedford, the Duchess of Buccleuch, R. H. Lady de Beauclerk, Viscountess Beauchamp, Miss Sophia Bristow, Marchioness of Carmarthen, Marchioness of Lothian, Duchess of Montrose, Duchess of Devonshire, Countess of Derby, Lady Derby, Madame Dillon, La Comtesse de Forbach, Dowager Lady Hunt, Dowager Lady Holland, La Comtesse de Hurst, Miss Jennings, the Duchess of Manchester, the Countess of Ossery, the Countess of Powis, Lady Payne, the Marchioness of Rockingham, the Right Hon. Lady Cecil Rice, the Countess Spencer, Lady Frances Scott, Miss Mary Sankey, Miss West, and the Countess of Pembroke.

Notwithstanding the enormous advance in chess, appreciation and practice generally, we have never since been able to boast of a list at all of this kind. There are Dukes Argyle, Athol, Ancaster, Bedford, Bolton, Buccleuch, Cumberland, Devonshire, Leeds, Manchester, Marlborough, Montague, Northumberland, Richmond, Roxburgh; Marquis Carmarthen, Rockingham; Earl Ashburnham, Besborough, Dartmouth, Egremont, Gower, Holderness, Northington, Ossory, Powis, Spencer, Shelburne, Waldegrave; Lords, E. Bentinck, Bateman, Barrington, Beauchamp, Breadalbane, G. Cavendish, John Cavendish, Clifford, Denbigh, Fitzmaurice, Fitzwilliam, Falmouth, Harrowby, Hillsborough, Irwine, Kerry, Kinnaird, March, Mountstewart, North, Oxford, Palmerston, Polnarth, Robert Spencer, Temple, Tyrunnell, Warwick, Willoughby de Broke, Amherst, Petre.

Among statesmen and politicians we find such names as the Earl of Chatham, Pitt, C. J. Fox, Lord Godolphin, Lord Sunderland, St. John and Wedderburn.

Prominent as players as well as supporters were General Conway, Count Bruhl, the French Ambassador, Duke de Mirepois, the Turkish Ambassador, Dr. Black, Sir Abram Janssens, G. Atwood, (one of Pitts' secretaries), Mr. Jennings, Mr. Cotter, and the Rev. Mr. Bouldeer.

Voltaire and Roussca were friends of Philidor, so also was David Garrick the actor; supporters in the musical world were numerous. A combination of high appreciation for chess and music combined is often found.

Philidor died in 1795. Sir Abram Janssens had already departed in 1775, as the recognized best player and one of the greatest enthusiasts, his loss left a great void in chess, Scandigh, Benedict, Prout and Asfra are musicians with whom we have ourselves played chess.

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### THE CARLOVINGIAN DYNASTY

In A.D. 757 Constantine Capronymus, Emperor of the East sent to King Pepin as a rare present the first organ ever seen in France.

### CHARLEMAGNE'S WAGER

The romance of Guerin de Montglave turns wholly upon a game of chess at which Charlemagne had lost his Kingdom to Guerin.

The short dialogue which preceded this game on which so great a stake depended, as narrated by the hero of the story to his sons is characteristic, and has thus been modernized by the Compte de Tressan, "I bet," said the Emperor to me "that you would not play your expectation against me on this chess board, unless I were to propose some very high stake." "Done, replied I, I will play then, provided only you bet against me your Kingdom of France." "Very good, let us see," cried Charlemagne, who fancied himself to be strong at chess. We play forthwith, I win his Kingdom, he falls a laughing at it, but I swear by St. Martin and all the Saints of Aquitain, that he must needs pay me by some sort of compensation or other. The Emperor therefore by way of equivalent surrenders to Guerin, all right to the City of Montglave, (Lyons), then in the hands of Saracens which is forthwith conquered by the hero, who afterwards names Mabolette the Soldan's daughter.

The earliest chess anecdote in France is given by Augustus, Duke of Luneburg in his great work on chess. It is extracted from an old Bavarian Chronicle, then in Library of Marcus Welsor, and states that Okarius, Okar or Otkar, Prince of Bavaria had a son of great promise, residing at the Court of King Pepin. One day Pepin's son when playing at chess with the young Prince of Bavaria, became so enraged at the latter for having repeatedly beaten him that he hit him on the temple with one of his rooks so as to kill him on the spot. This anecdote is confirmed in another Bavarian Chronicle, and in the Guirinalia 1060. The acts of Saint Guirin by Metellus of Tegernsee. The murder of Okar happened during the reign of Pepin 752 to 768.

In another romance containing the history of Les Quatre Fils Aymson, we read that Duke Richard of Normandy was playing at chess with Ivonnet, son of Regnant, (Rinalde) when he was arrested by the officers of Regnant, who said to him, "Aryse up Duke Rycharde, for in despite of Charlemagne who loveth you so much, ye shall be hanged now. When Duke Rycharde saw that these sergeantes had him thus by the arms and held in his hande a lively (dame) of ivory where at he wolde have given a mate to Yennet he withdrew his arme and gave to one of the sergeantes such a strike with it into the forehead that he made him tumble over and over at his feete, and then he tooke rocke and smote another at all upon his head that he all loost it to the brayne.

## THE HABITS AND IDIOSYNCRACIES OF CHESS PLAYERS

(MYSELF)

NOTE. Speaking as a chess player, Bird is used, for matters common or general, the editorial us or we is adopted, but when expressing my own individual knowledge or opinion only, I is preferred.

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The temperaments of chess players vary, some get easily disconcerted, disturbed and even distracted; others seem little affected by passing events, a few, apparently not at all: some even like a gallery and don't object to reasonable conversation; by conversations or little interruptions which would pass unheeded by a McDonnell or a Bird, or perhaps a Zukertortian would sadly disconcert a Buckle or a Morphy, make Staunton angry, and drive a Gossip to despair.

The attitude as well as the deportment and demeanour of chess players at the board shows many varieties: Anderssen and Captain Mackenzie were statuesque; Staunton, not quite so tall as the Rev. J. Owen, seeming to be soaring up aloft. Harrwitz not quite so small as Gunsberg, seemed sinking to the ground, but the story that he once disappeared overawed by Staunton's style and manner of moving, and was, after a search, found

under the table, is a mere canard of Staunton's which need not be too confidently accepted. Harrwitz disliked being called a small German by Staunton because it savoured too strongly of the sausage element, saying if he makes sausage meat of me I will make mincemeat of him.

Staunton pretended sometimes not to see Harrwitz, and would look round the room and even under the chairs for him when he was sitting at his elbow, which greatly annoyed Harrwitz, who, however, sometimes got a turn, and was not slow to retaliate. In a game one day, Staunton materially damaged his own prospects by playing very tamely and feebly, and testily complained—"I have lost a move." Harrwitz told the waiter to stop his work, and search the room until he had found Staunton's lost move, and his manner of saying it caused a degree of merriment by no means pleasing to the English Champion.

Staunton was considered full-blooded, and his amiable French opponent, who used to play for 5 pounds a game no doubt thought he expressed himself favorably and forcibly when he said he is one very nice, charmant man, but he is a "---- fool."

Staunton's celebrated stories about Lowenthal and Williams, though very amusing to chess ears, I omit for obvious reasons, though extremely funny as Staunton originally told them, and as MacDonnell repeats them, they are probably not strictly founded on fact, and are lacking of the respect to which the memories of two such amiable and chivalrous chess players as Williams and Lowenthal are entitled.

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### STAKES AT CHESS

The question of stakes or money terms upon which chess is played is a question of the first importance in the interests of chess, and a few notes of my experience upon the subject may not be inappropriate. After about three months looking on at chess play in 1844, at Raymond's Coffee House near the City Road Gate, where Dr. Michaelson of the Morning Post, and Mr. Finley, a farrier, were the respective giants, and a cup of coffee the usual stake, I learned the moves at chess, and receiving the odds of a Queen for a few games, I happened one day to hear with astonishment that the gentleman conceding me the odds was not as I supposed, the champion of the world, but that better players could be found at Goodes, Ludgate Hill, and Simpson's in the Strand. To the former I soon resorted and found Kling, Kuiper and Muckle, the principal professionals there; a nominal fee of sixpence being the charge per game, and Staunton, the champion had played many games at that rate. It was some weeks before I mustered resolution to visit Simpson's spacious and handsome hall, but, once arrived there, I made myself at home. Lowe, Williams and Finch were the attendant players there, and extensively they were supported. From each received the Queen soon improving to the odds of the Knight, and then playing even with them. Buckle alone, who did not mind hard work, essayed to give me Pawn and move, but for a short time only. One shilling a game has always been the recognized stake at Simpson's, and also at St. Georges the principal London Chess Club, but there have been exceptions, John Cochrane and Bird, the Rev. G. A. MacDonnell and Bird, and S. Boden and Bird never played for anything, and these ranked among the most popular of games, and the players were favourite opponents. In 1873, Wisker was holder of the British Chess Association Challenge Cup, but had never seen or played with Bird, who had been for six years out of chess. An accidental meeting by them, and the presence and intervention of Lowenthal and Boden, led to the Wisker and Bird four matches, the first for 5 pounds, and the other for credit of victory only. Anderssen and Bird always played 5/- a game, Zukertort and Bird 2/6, Steinitz and Bird's first sixteen games were without stakes, their match of 1866-7 for 25 pounds only. Before the year 1866, 10 pounds or 20 pounds a side was a convenient and common stake for a match. Staunton and Harrwitz, Staunton and Horwitz, Morphy and Anderssen, Steinitz and Blackburne, Steinitz and Zukertort, and Falkbeer and Bird were all within these figures. The Championship match in 1843, England and France, between Staunton and St. Amant was for 100 pounds a side, but the English player had to go to Paris, and the match was a long one, and it was hoped even at that time that future matches would be mainly for the honour of victory, and that the

entire money in the case would be a reasonable sum to liberally cover the players' time and expenses. Morphy reluctantly played for 100 pounds a side in 1858, but his matches with Anderssen, Harrwitz and others were for merely nominal stakes. In 1866 a bad example was set in the case of Steinitz and Anderssen, when 100 pounds a side was played for, and although Steinitz and Blackburne, and Zukertort and Blackburne were matches for 60 pounds a side the stakes were only thus limited to the amount which could be conveniently obtained from backers at the time. So stakes progressed until Steinitz and Zukertort actually played for 400 pounds a side, a sum neither party could afford to lose, even though they could tax their chess supporters for it. Any chance of a return match which Zukertort so much desired, became impossible, hence the extraordinary depression of the great chess victor in two of the most important Internationals ever held, viz., Paris in 1878, and Criterion, London, 1883.

There is too much reason to fear that the result of this match, and Zukertort's sensitiveness to supposed coolness towards him afterwards mainly contributed to cause his premature break up and untimely end. I always advised him before the match, in justice to himself, to stipulate for a time limit of 20 or 25 moves an hour, and not to play for more than 100 pounds a side, the previous extreme maximum for the greatest matches, happy for him if he had observed this rule; as he himself admitted. Zukertort lived in the Walworth Road just past my single eleven years lodging —5 Heygate Street; and he voluntarily confided many matters to me during the last twelve months of his life, which was for certain reasons fortunate. His two beautiful daughters, the sole care of his life, are now provided for, one nine years of age, and the other thirteen years of age, are being educated at or near Berlin by Zukertort's mother and his married sister.

Returning to stakes, I have met here and there with an amateur who has had scruples and preferred not even playing for the shilling.

Buckle, Lord Lyttleton, and many eminent in chess, were strongly in favour of the customary small stake, and I have seen dignitaries of the Church, and spotless amateurs, pocket their shillings with as much gusto as the poor and much abused professional. It is a kind of voucher to mark the score.

Professor Ruskin and others who have referred to this question, saw no objection to the time-honoured stake, and it has been the rule at the greatest clubs, for, by fixing a custom, it was hoped to keep the stakes within prescribed limit. It must be admitted that the difference between one shilling and 25 pounds, 50 pounds or 100 pounds on a game is far too large.

Since the growth of the foreign demands for stakes, not thought of in the days of Philidor, La Bourdonnais, McDonnell, Staunton and Morphy, squaring between players, has been asserted, viz.— in 1878, 1885, and 1887, besides which it has always seemed to me that as the stakes go up the play goes down, and it certainly would be difficult to name a match in which so few interesting games took place as that between Steinitz and Zukertort for 400 pounds a side, played in the United States at New York, St. Louis and New Orleans in 1886.

A sedate and rather severe looking stranger challenged Bird to a game of chess once, just when Bird had finished a long sitting with a strong player, and was in rather a lively mood. "A stake, I suppose," said Bird. "No, I don't like stakes," said the stranger. "Then suppose we say a chop, or even a basin of soup, fried sole, or box of cigars." The stranger looked awful for a moment but dismayed by the good temper of his vis a vis, suddenly relaxed and conformed to the usual rule, and as the love tales conclude was happy ever afterwards.

It is best to understand that the stake on each game is a shilling, not to say simply we play for a shilling. Once, after an eight hours sitting, a countryman after losing twenty games blandly handed Mr. F. one shilling for the sitting, and could not be induced to part with more.

Stakes at chess must not be confounded with the favourite "Comestible." Missing Word calls it by that name.

Meat is sometimes pronounced by some we know almost like mate. An Irishman addressing the cook instead of the mate once on board of a vessel, said, "Are you the mate?" and was met with the reply, "No, I am the man what cooks the mate." It was remarked after a game that many checks were given without any mate being obtained.

Another says, "The Queen in chess does all the work, yet the King gets all the checks."

Mr. C. B., the well-known enthusiast, but not always successful chess player dining with a friend at Simpson's one day, the latter recurred to the changes which had taken place there and expressed regret that the Grand chess Divan had been transformed into a dining room. "Faix," said Mr. C. B. as he took up a toothpick, "It's the first time in my life that I ever felt disposed to say grace after mate in this room."

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### SLOW PLAY

Some players are very slow, hence one was called the "Telegraph" and others by appropriate names of which I recollect best "West Australian" and the "Flying Dutchman." About forty years ago there were eight young and rising players nearly approaching first class, they were S. S. Boden, the Rev. W. Audrey, Captain Cunningham, G. W. Medley, J. Medley, C. T. Smith, A. Simons and H. E. Bird. Three of these, remarkable for ingenuity and sudden surprises had familiar appellations. One was termed "The Snake," another that "Old Serpent," I was "The enemy of the human race." A well known looker on who used to lean over the board and talk a great deal was called "The Coroner" because it was said he not only held an inquest on the board, but also sat upon the body.

One wrote—

"I saw them sitting at a board  
Like statues at a show,  
And I myself was also bored  
To find them move too slow."

Paulsen once after an hour's reflection moved his King one square only, a lady observed "that it seemed a great time for such a little move."

Three consultation games were played at one of the County meetings which lasted together 48 hours, two were drawn and one adjourned.

Some games in matches between Staunton and Williams, and Paulsen and Kolisch about forty years ago were unduly protracted. Against Medley the last named (Kolisch) took two hours for three moves and this had much to do with the initiation of the time limit with the encumbrances of sand glasses and clocks which the majority of players still approve of.

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### DINNER AND CHESS

At Pursell's, people used to eat chops, smoke cigars or pipes, play chess, and talk cricket all at the same time, which seems to contradict the assumption that it is impossible to do two things at once. Some say they cannot play chess before dinner, others not after dinner. Too much dinner is considered a fair excuse for losing at chess, but no dinner at all is not a valid plea.



According to the Rev. A. B. Skipworth, who should be an authority on the subject, professional chess players are not supposed to dine at all, but our great friend, the genial Mars, dissents from this view. Staunton, Boden, Steinitz, Mars and Skipworth himself are essentially diners, and Bird has been accused of a tendency that way.

The professionals so called are very few, compared with former years, yet they find the beef for many a Chess Editor, who barely supplies the salt.

It is not a desirable thing in England like it was in India, Arabia and Sweden to have the reputation of being great in chess, nor is it supposed now, as it was in the Arabian manuscript, the Treasure of the Sciences, and Olaus Magnus' work to imply any particular proof of wisdom and discretion or evidence of fitness for other things and one is not likely to secure a patron, or a post, much less a wife by it. An example of how professional chess players are regarded and can be treated now-a-days is afforded by the gradual extinction of the class, and absence of the only two young masters from their native country. The British Chess Magazine managers are not ignorant of the significance of the course which they have and are still taking against chess masters. The Rev. W. Wayte and the Rev. J. Owen, both of whom have known for forty years, were captains of the respective teams in a proposed monster match North v. South which took place at the Great Western Hotel, Birmingham, on the 28th of January last, the inception of which shows how enthusiasm and ability can be treated by those who assume the management and control of these contests. At the very outset before any disposition or inclination of any kind in the matter was evinced by the masters the self-appointed inceptors took upon themselves the very superfluous and invidious task of barring all professionals, and the Chairman who seems to have joined it recently, is the same chess patron who would not support my proposal for the Jubilee Tournament of 1887 (successfully carried out with the aid of the Times) on the ground "that it was not within the province of any player, however eminent and enthusiastic to usurp the functions of the executive appointed for the purpose (whether paid executive chose to take action or not). May we ask are the parties who agitated this monster tournament, those who were specially appointed for any such purpose. Who first thought of the happy idea of covering amateurs' expenses, and of excluding just those players likely to furnish the best and most instructive and amusing games, such in fact as the public most like to see.

Does this abundance of contests answer one good end, does it even divert attention from the fact that it is absorbing the funds, if not strictly taking the place of the 1892 International Chess Tournament which we are under engagement to our own public and still more to foreign chess players to provide in return for Breslau, Amsterdam and Dresden hospitality and meetings.

To return to dinners, next to them, headaches, stomach aches, and indigestion often explain the loss of a game, whilst an acute attack of gout is considered rather advantageous than otherwise.

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### LOOKERS ON

I know players who have looked on at chess for years that have never been seen to engage in a game. Occasionally the occupiers of the earliest seats carry cigar cases, but more frequently they do not. Some talk over the game obtrusively which is not always convenient.

Such a one noticing that no money ever passed when Boden and Bird played, patronizingly said to the former, "Mr. Boden, I am so glad to find you do not care for 'filthy lucre.'" B. replied, "It is not to the `filthy lucre' I object, but to the `filthy looker on.'"

It is bad form for spectators to remove the pieces from the board without the consent of the players, even if it

be done for the purpose of demonstrating more forcibly what move should be made.

One who never remained a spectator more than five minutes, observed, all he desired was to get a birds-eye view of Bird's position.

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### EXCUSES

Boden and Bird were favourite opponents for 25 years and though very opposite in styles were, in the long run, singularly even in their series. It was the practice of both to resign at the proper moment. Bird, once it was thought, gave up too early. "Oh, it is hopeless," said he. "I have my misgivings, I cannot contend against such forebodings, one Boden is too much, for me."

One player, who rarely scored a game, was likened to a very great musical composer—"Beethoven"—(Beat often)!!

The excuse made for our old friend L., the hatter, that he was not playing in his best tile hardly applied. Buckle, with his proverbially `bad hat', usually under the table, yet invariably played superbly.

A man of leather found his efforts to excel, bootless. The retired fishmonger Umpleby played but a (f) visionary game. The tailor complained that he played more like a goose than a bird.

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### THE PIECES IN CHESS

Jokes have been sometimes made about the pieces used in chess. Even the calm and serene Mr. Lambe could not refrain from being facetious in reference to the conversion of a Pawn or private soldier into a Queen. Another remarked that the Queen works very hard for a lazy King who alone gets all the checks. Umpleby, the retired fishmonger in the chess story declared that he would have been the best player in the world, but for the Knights at chess which jumped about in the most unreasonable and absurd manner without rhyme or reason, here there and everywhere, and the lady who it was said was found engaged and playing with thirty-two men remained single ever afterwards. A rather boasting player once said, "I must win, I have a piece ---a (of) head." One answered, "You would be more likely to win, if instead of a piece of a head, you had a whole head."

The Rooks occupy the corner squares, and may be played along either of the files of squares they command.

Mr. Serjeant Drytong whose legal acumen was acknowledged by all parties, was also distinguished for a pretty wit and great skill in our Royal Game.

On one occasion he appeared for the Defendant in an action brought by four persons to recover a sum of money lost by his client in a betting transaction. In the course of his speech the judge (C. J. Wontone) interrupting him asked, Do I understand you to say that the Plaintiffs were standing two and two at each end of the street in order to intercept the Defendant when he came out. Not exactly two and two, my lord, said the counsel, but as on a chess board. There was a Rook at every corner, only these, as I shall show, did not act upon the square.

Miss Rooster, on one occasion when her dearest friend, Miss Pullet called, was found so absorbed in studying a problem by the great Schwerlagerbier, that her visitor could not obtain even a sign of recognition. After

various unsuccessful efforts to attract the attention of the fair enthusiast, Miss Pullet departed, and meeting an acquaintance immediately afterwards jocosely remarked that she had left Miss Rooster engaged with thirty-two men, whereby she acquired the reputation of being a dangerous coquette. To this thoughtless jest Miss Rooster ascribed the circumstance, that during the remainder of her life she walked in meditation fancy free.

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### COVENT GARDEN INSPIRATION

We have already seen that the Chess Masters whom the Fortnightly Review have in a sense made immortal are Lowenthal, Rosenthal, Horwitz, Zukertort, Winawer and Hoffer, the writers seem to have forgotten his Lordship and Pursell's great philosopher who have furnished more fun than all the above put together, and where is the typical "P.F.G." (pale faced German), "California" and the "fidgetty W." and Hoffer's "Estimate of the value of English Players" (1887). Surely half the wit of these Fortnightly Review contributors could have made an article of these alone without the addition of more serious persons such as Steinitz, Blackburne and Bird.

"A foreign estimate of the value of English Chess Players from Covent Garden" was the title of a little skit which caused some amusement five or six years ago. It commenced with Blackburne 5 pounds for a blindfold performance, Gunsberg 2 pounds: 2 : 0 : 0 for a simultaneous performance, and ranges downwards till it comes to two pence for the price of Pollock's proverbial pint of porter. Bird could always be bought for a glass of whiskey hot and a pleasing nod, and Mason could be got rid of on an emergency for half-a-crown. Even poor Zukertort at the B. C. towards the last stood very low. One evening, after the ordinary dinner at this famous chess club, the whole of the Amateur Company, with no exception, adjourned to cards and billiards, Zukertort, Blackburne, Gunsberg and Bird remained alone in the chess room, the last named proposed a match between themselves, the others less enthusiastic did not fall in and after a desultory conversation of half-an-hour or so the little band dispersed.

The article about "Fleas and Nits" which well nigh led to the extinction of the Chess Monthly emanated from Covent Garden and was aimed at Mr. Steinitz.

Steinitz has perhaps been the subject of more jokes than any other chess player. From the day when he first assumed the responsibilities of chess editorship, and as some are wont to say "kept watch over The Field Office lest it should disappear before the morning," to the time when he unfortunately left us for America he was nearly always a fertile theme of amusement with the joke-loving members of the chess fraternity. We fancy we see him now with pen behind the ear pacing up and down the Divan rooms with horried start and whisper dread, saying, "O have you seen my article! How many K's in occur? and is there more than one H in editor?" He has improved since then and is a match for Hoffer. The clocks (implements of torture I call them) used for regulating the time consumed in chess matches have led to several facetious stories at Steinitz's expense, some, however, not too good natured. Still it was curious to see his gymnastics, mental and physical, between observance of the chess board and the time pieces on occasions when time run short and indeed sometimes when it did not.

A game between Steinitz and Rosenthal in the London Criterion Tournament of 1883 furnished an example which will doubtless be familiarly remembered by those present. With eight moves to make in about as many minutes in his excitement he had apparently unwillingly climbed the back of a chair and not till he had completed the requisite number within the hour and began to breathe freely did he seem conscious of where he was. Though anxious for a moment or so he succeeded in getting down very cleverly without mishap, not however escaping some signs of trepidation.

A St. Louis writer in 1886, after one of his games with Zukertort, described in true American fashion Steinitz's tall chair and short legs and his frantic efforts to regain terra firma, as the writer described it, to reach the American hemisphere. Steinitz's high appreciation of proficiency in the game and what is due to one who attains it was once illustrated before a great man at Vienna, who rebuked him for humming whilst playing at chess, saying, "Don't you know that I am the great Banker?" The reply was characteristic of Steinitz. "And don't you know that I am the Rothschild of chess?"

A beautiful chess position with Steinitz beats any work of art as Al Solis chess, in the opinion of the Caliph, one thousand years ago far excelled the flowers in his most beautiful garden and everything that was in it. More than this, Prime Ministers and Lord Chancellors, Liberal and Conservative, come and go but there is but one first Lord in chess, says Steinitz.

Steinitz was so much gratified with the reminder of mine at Simpson's, that three of the greatest minds ever known have had the same initials that he will pardon the little addition joke from Paternoster Row. The three mighty W.S.'s are Wilhelm Steinitz, William Shakespeare and Walter Scott. He was not so well pleased with the addition of the unnecessary missing words William Sykes.

Steinitz was introduced at a club once as the Champion. "Of what?" was the reply.

Steinitz has been known to grieve much when he has lost at chess; at Dundee, for example, in 1866 after his defeat by De Vere his friends became alarmed at his woe and disappearance. Again, after his fall to Rosenthal in a game he should have won at the Criterion in 1883, news were brought that he was on a seat in St. James' Park quite uncontrollable.

Steinitz is liberally disposed to others in mind and purse. The following brevities on chess are known to have been much admired by him, I therefore append them for his artistic eye.

So old and enthusiastic a chess player as Bird, and one who has travelled about so much professionally, and on chess, has naturally been the object of many pleasantries, and bon mots, although he escaped the Fortnightly Review writers, being regarded, at least by one of them as a very serious person, L'Anglais comme il faut of the Vienna Neue Frie Presse. The despised Britisher of custom house officers (who always chalk him away, hardly deigning to examine his luggage even). He has figured as the sea captain of the New York Sun, the farmer of the Rochester Press, the ladies chess professor of the Albany Argus, and the veteran of the Montreal Press, his vicissitudes have led him into strange places, among others to a wigwam of the Indians at Sarnia in 1860, and a representation of one in the Vienna Exhibition of 1873, when much to the amusement of Professor Anderssen and Baron Kolisch he received such a cordial reception from a lady who recognized him as an old friend and customer at Niagara falls, the lady in question being commonly termed a squaw (not a disrespectful word for a lady it is hoped). Bird has been in the Nest at Amsterdam, in the Bowery at New York, and in the accident ward at Vienna, and has witnessed many strange things and distressing circumstances, and has endured interviewers and Irish Home Rulers in America without a shudder, and has perhaps been asked more questions about chess than any man living, because he good naturedly always answers them, and has furnished matter enough in ten minutes for a two-column article. He has been accused of a partiality for whisky hot, especially when served by female hands, of ordering soles by special train at Nuremberg, though he only disposed of them at breakfast not knowing their price or from whence they came. Blackburne and Hoffer are responsible for the statement that he sat up through the night at Vienna preparing statistics, with nothing but his hat on. The allegation in the Field and elsewhere that he instructed the French President to fetch a cab for him on a busy fete day at the Champs de Elysees, in 1878, is not just, that genial and courteous gentleman having volunteered to do so under exceptional circumstances, and as all act of sympathy, and perhaps on account of Bird's play, who though suffering acutely from gout on that particular day won one of his two best games of Anderssen. If Bird had a carriage and pair to the barbers to get a shave (quite recently asserted) it was because he could not find a conveyance with one horse in time

to reach his destination. When he made a late dinner solely off Pate de Foie Grass at the Marquis d'Andigny's banquet at St. Germain, Paris, in 1878, when there were any number of courses, he did so because he liked the flavour (certainly did not find it savourless) not comprehending the waiter's surprise or aware of its bilious tendency till afterwards. Even a king once dined off goose livers or something of the sort, and we have heard somewhere of a "feast of snails."

Even assuming glasses of Lager, 20 Schnaps, and 30 plates of bread and cheese were consumed at the village with the unpronounceable name 70 miles this side of Nuremberg, one intensely hot afternoon in July, 1883, on the eve of the International Tournament in that city when the train unpolitely went on, leaving him behind, Bird was not the only consumer nor responsible for the food famine, which the Field and the Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic say prevailed afterwards for the whole of the inhabitants of the place (fifty souls) including the old lady ill in bed, and her attendant who deserted her for the afternoon partook thereof.

Neither Steinitz nor Bird are funny men; the latter most reserved among his superiors, yet looks good humored. At the Anglo-American Hotel, Hamilton, in 1860, he was honored by a recognition each morning for a week from the Prince of Wales. At the second Universities chess match, Perrott's, Milk Street, 1874, a young gentleman introduced himself to Bird, and a pleasant chat was commenced, interrupted only by unreasonable intrusion. This gentleman to Bird's surprise who thus honoured him by interest in chess was H.R.H. Prince Leopold.

Professor Ruskin, Lord Randolph Churchill and many eminent men have supported Bird's chess efforts with much approval; in the far past J. P. Benjamin Esq., Q.C., and Sir Charles Russell enjoyed an occasional game. Chief Justice Cockburn, and Sir George Jessel seem to have liked chess. The list of highly distinguished men reported to admire the game is varied and significant.

Many working men have sought wrinkles from Bird; the late Mr. Bradlaugh at intervals extending over thirty years has ardently played occasionally chess or draught skirmishes with much zest. He was singularly agreeable and good tempered and a moderate player at both. Bird knew much of Ireland and the people twenty to thirty years ago. Isaac Butt was fond of chess but played it but indifferently. Chief Baron Pigott who also knew it presided in the long trial Bartlett v. Lewis, Overend, Gurney, etc., and seemed much surprised at a chess allusion. Said Butt to me, "Come, you are not playing chess with me." Whiteside and Sullivan two of the six Counsel on the other side, almost simultaneously replied, "A good thing for you brother Butt, for you would surely soon be checkmated."

The master hand who sketched Mason for the Fortnightly Review scarcely did full justice to his vocal ability, dancing proclivities and Christian friends, and Blackburne's marvellous oracles and dictums pass unnoticed. Tinsley Lee, Van Vliet, Muller and Jasnagrodzky all have their peculiarities which shall remain untouched, for they are young and sensitive, whilst the most amusing since the loss of Pursell's Lordship (next to the Philosopher who happily very much survives) is the extremely popular Monsieur.

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### CHESS PATRONS

There have in recent years been annually about eight or ten chess patrons who have contributed more to promote high class chess than all the rest of her Majesty's subjects, and remarkable as it may appear, with one exception there is not one titled, or what would be deemed very distinguished name among them.

250 pounds to 300 pounds a year is an ample sum for necessary first class chess competitions, but nothing like that has been raised under present auspices in this great Metropolis since 1883, or on the average for many years. There are some who will buy chess books who would not care to play at least in a public room

on any conditions; there are, on the other hand, some who drop their shillings freely at chess without the slightest instruction or improvement who would scorn to buy a chess book. Even "California" who greatly desired to improve and apparently cared little about expense, and with his double or quits propensity in play would not deign to notice a chess book. One said that this amateur possessed all the requisites of a loser playing very fastly, very badly and risking very rashly. One morning about twelve before chess hours at the Cafe International, New York, whilst writing I was accosted by a tall and fashionable looking American whom I had seen once or twice before playing with Mackenzie or Mason, but had never spoken to. "I see you are busy," said he. "It is not particularly pressing for the moment," said I, placing my work aside. He then commenced to interview me concerning Morphy, asking my opinion and description of him in every conceivable manner; Staunton, Buckle, Anderssen, Steinitz and Blackburne followed in rapid succession. All things temporal have an end and a welcome pause came in this case. Taking up a chess book lying by my side which happened to be a gilt copy of Chess Masterpieces, just out, he said, "How much might that book be?" "Oh! about a dollar," said I. He replied, "I guess that's a pretty tall book, but times are bad and I guess I cannot invest a dollar on that ere book." I found he was one of the non-purchasing class but had the gambling element. "I will play you a game for a dollar if you will give me the odds of a Rook." "I cannot give it you," said I, "but will try the Knight for the usual quarter." He would take nothing less than a Rook and for half-a-dollar, so I made the attempt and he seem'd to play far too well for the odds, kept his advantage for a time well and my prospects or the prospects of my half-dollar were not encouraging, the game toughened, however, and I got a passed Pawn. It was as Monsieur would say "nothing," but it seem'd to bother him immensely. He brought four pieces to stop that poor little Pawn when one would have done, utterly ignoring the policy of economy of force, his game consequently got disarranged and he lost, after about an hour's fighting, No. 1. He proposed another, played wretchedly, and lost No. 2; worse and worse he played always wanting to increase his stake, but I remained true to the classics and would not deviate from the time-honoured stake. As it was I had to draw seven dollars which my opponent parted with most pleasantly, asked me to have a cigar and a nerver, and said I was a wonderful player. He felt that he had a fair look in. Had he bought the book the bare possibility of an injudicious purchase might have preyed upon his mind; the book however was fairly priced. In New York the ten dollar game arose in this way, receiving Rook, Pawn and three moves, I lost on balance ten games, 5 dollars, and demanded double or quits which I was forced to comply with. Passed pawns bothered him also. I was New York Sun Chess Editor and not a chess book investor.

Some have been known to accumulate chess libraries which frequently get dispersed, a copy of Lolli sold for 5 pounds, another equally good for 2/6. The difference between two-pence and 170 pounds for Caxton represents the largest profit yet recorded on a chess book. A copy of Mr. Christie's little work on the Greek and Roman Theory (1799) should be valuable.

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### STYLE IN CHESS

Some chess players make more lively games than others, and more interesting to watch, and it is curious what different styles can be discerned in the play of the greatest masters of assumed equal ability, a proof of the great versatility of the game; Anderssen was remarkable for ingenuity and invention, Morphy for intuitive genius and grace, Zukertort for scientific development and Staunton, Buckle, Steinitz and Mason for patience, care and power of utilizing to the utmost the smallest advantages winning by hairs breadth merely. The above represent distinctive schools at chess. Blackburne's play shews little resemblance to that of Bird, Tarrasch and Tchigorin are quite different in style, the former most learned and profound the latter most enterprising.

Lasker's play partakes somewhat of the characteristics of both, Burn and Gunsberg have each a style of their own, and Mackenzie was particularly grand and irresistible in his attacks, Bird is sometimes called the best

player of bad games and he often makes a capital middle and splendid end game from an unscientific and erratic beginning. One enthusiast observed that there were only three parts of the game he could not play, viz., the beginning, the middle and the end.

The following is an illustration of four styles of play; the reader can supply real names to satisfy his own taste and imagination.

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### STYLE AT CHESS

After a slumber of four years Bangs the fresh, the growing, the vigorous, has risen from his lair, and shaking the dew from his mane, has given utterance to a roar that no champion of chess can hear without a shudder. There is no doubt that he has gained at least a pawn in strength since 1868. Dr. Hooker too, the lightning player, now gives where he once received a Castle. Beach has returned to his native heath rich with the experience of Morphy's old haunt the Cafe de la Regence. Hall has toughened his sinews by many a desperate tug with the paladins of New York. Mackenzie himself has felt the force of his genius and gazed on his moves with astonishment. Between the styles of these four great players there is a notable difference. Bangs, like the lion, tears everything absolutely to fragments that comes within the reach of his claws. Hooker, like the eagle, soars screaming aloft sometimes to such a height that he loses himself but only to return with a desperate sense which Bangs himself can hardly withstand. Beach, more like the slow worm, insinuates gradually into the bowels of the enemy making his presence only felt by the effect, while Hall, on the contrary, rushes right onward like the locomotive scattering obstacles to right and left, and treating his antagonist with no more ceremony than if he were a cow strayed accidentally upon the track.

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### BUCKLE'S CHESS REFERENCES

Buckle's Chess References, which are not so full as we could wish contain the names of Gerbert (Pope Sylvester, 2) (992, 1003), Cranmer, Wolsey, Pitt and Wilberforce, as chess players, but do not refer in any way to Beckett, Luther, or Voltaire, names mentioned in Linde, neither think of Alcuin, or consider the chess probabilities of the contemporary reigns of Offer, Egbert, Charlemagne, Harun, and Irene.

Van der Linde assigns the 13th Century for first knowledge of chess in England, and places it under the head of Kriegspiel, but on what grounds, or what he conceives this Kriegspiel to be, or how it differs from chess does not clearly appear in his book, his space being rather devoted to sneers or dissent from the statements and conclusions of previous writers, than at advancing any distinct theory of his own.

He labours much to cast doubts on Charlemagne's knowledge of chess, and to infer that the chess men preserved and considered to have belonged to him, reported upon by Dr. Hyde, F. Douce, and Sir F. Madden, are of comparatively recent date.

Einhard, the historian of Charlemagne, he says does not mention chess, Cranmer, Wolsey, Pope, Pitt, Chatham, Fox, Wilberforce, and other well accredited names which interest us are absent from his list, which is surprising, considering his mass of petty detail.

More than two-thirds of these volumes are devoted to descriptive catalogues of books and magazines from Jacobus de Cessolus, the first European work devoted to chess in the 13th century, down to the various editions of Philidor, Sarratt, Allgaier, W. Lewis, G. Walker, the German handbooks, and Staunton's popular works.

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INTERDICTIONS OF CHESS

Al Hakem Biamri Llah, or Abu Ali Mansur, sixth Khalif of the dynasty of the Fatimites or Obeydites of Egypt, 996–1021, according to some authorities interdicted chess. Mr. Harkness in Notes to Living Chess implies that he had some put to death for playing it. Sprenger, Gayangoz, and Forbes do not mention or confirm this, besides, though this Khalif did not much regard the Koran, kept dancing–women and singers, indulged in all sorts of frivolous pastimes, and was very much addicted to drinking, as well as cruelty and tyranny, he was not a bigot. The more famous Al Mansur (962–1002), the celebrated General and Minister of Hisham II, tenth Sultan of Cordova, of the dynasty of Ummeyyah, was more likely to have issued such a mandate, for we read "in order to gain popularity with the ignorant multitude, and to court the favour of the ulemas of Cordova, and other strict men, who were averse to the cultivation of philosophical sciences, Al Mansur commanded a search to be made in Al Hakem's library, when all works treating on ethics, dialectics, metaphysics, and astronomy, were either burnt in the squares of the city, or thrown into the wells and cisterns of the palace. The only books suffered to remain in the splendid library, founded by Al Hakem, II (fourth of Cordova, 822–852, the enlightened humane and just Rahman, II) were those on rhetoric, grammar, history, medicine, arithmetic, and other sciences, considered lawful."

Any scholar found indulging in any of the prescribed studies, was immediately arraigned before a Court composed of kadhis and ulemas, and, if convicted, his books were burnt, and himself sent to prison.

I can find no other notice of a ruler or Khalif likely to have forbidden chess, but in 1254 Lewis, IX, in France, is recorded to have interdicted the game.

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IRELAND

The word, chess, whatever it may have signified, was common in Ireland long before it is ever found in English annals. The quotation from the Saxon Chronicle, of the Earl of Devonshire and his daughter playing chess together, refers to the reign of Edgar, about half a century before Canute played chess; but in Ireland the numerous references and legacies of chess–boards are of eight hundred years' earlier date.

Several scholars in Ireland have discussed the question of probable early knowledge of chess there.

Fitchell, a very ancient game in that country, was uniformly translated, chess.

O'Flanagan, Professor of the Irish language in the University of Dublin, writing to Twiss about the end of last century in Reference to Dr. Hyde's quotations, thought Fitchell meant chess.

J. C. Walker wrote:—"Chess is not now (1790) a common game in Ireland; it is played at and understood by very few; yet it was a favourite game among the early Irish, and the amusement of the chiefs in their camps.

"It is called Fill, and sometimes Fitchell, to distinguish it from Fall, another game on the Tables, which are called Taibhle Fill.

"The origin of Fill in Ireland eludes the grasp of history."

The Chess King preserved by Dr. Petrie, L.L.D., bears no small resemblance to those found in the Isle of Lewis, now in the British Museum, and which have been graphically reported upon by Sir F. Madden.



John O'Donovan, Esq., author of our best Irish Grammar, in "Leabhar na'q Ceart, or the Book of Rights," 1847, from MS. of 1390 to 1418, frequently refers to the game, and the legacies of Cathair Mor, who reigned 118 to 148, contain, among other remarkable bequests, thirteen of chess-boards. Once a set of chess-men is specified--and, again, a chess-board and white chess-men. The bequests of the said Cathair Mor are also cited by O'Flaherty, who mentions to have seen the testament in writing, and in Patrick O'Kelly's work, Dublin, 1844, "The History of Ireland, Ancient and Modern," taken from the most authentic records, and dedicated to the Irish Brigade, translated from the French of Abbe McGeoghegan (a work of rather more than a century ago).

Col. Vallancey, in his "Collectanea de Reb. Hib.," seems to insinuate that the Irish derived it with other arts from the East. "Phil," says he, "is the Arabic name of chess, from Phil, the Elephant, one of the principle figures on the table."

In the old Breton Laws we find that one tax levied by the Monarch of Ireland in every province was to be paid in chess-boards and complete sets of men, and that every Burgh (or Inn-holder of the States) was obliged to furnish travellers with salt provisions, lodging, and a chess-board, gratis. (NOTE. That must have been very long ago.) In a description of Tamar or Tara Hall, formerly the residence of the Monarch of Ireland--it stood on a beautiful hill in the county of Meath during the Pagan ages--lately discovered in the Seabright Collection, Fidche--allaigh, or chess-players, appear amongst the officers of the household.

"Langst ver der Erfindung," says Linde; and again, "Wenn die ganze geschichte von Irland ein solches Lug-gund Truggewebe ist, wie das Fidcill Gefasel ist sie wirklich Keltisch."

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### THE GERMAN CHESS THEORISTS

Dr. A. Van der Linde's great work (Berlin, 1874), following Weber, Berlin, 1872, Der Lasa and others, containing 1,118 pages, 540 diagrams, 4,098 names, and 2,500 catalogue items.

In Linde's book, no less than 500 of the 540 diagrams are on the eight times eight square board, with the 32 pieces used in Modern Chess (i.e., examples of the game with positions or problems thereat as we understand it).

It is also curious as affecting Linde's consistency, that Al Suli and Adali, whose problems he gives at chess as we now play it, were dead before the time he assigns for the first knowledge of the same. His own pet authority, Masudi, 890-959, gives the story of Al Suli's chess, to which nothing could be compared without declaring it to be any other game (pages 58 and 59).

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### ITALY

Opposite Italienisch Linde has 1,348 to 1,358, but the story of the rebuke of the Bishop of Florence by Cardinal Damianus, for playing chess in a tavern when he should have been at prayers, given by Forbes and repeated by Linde, is of earlier date (1061), Buzecca's blindfold play at chess on the invitation of Dante's patron, the Master of Ravenna, before a distinguished company, is attributed to the year 1266.

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### KRIEGSSPIEL

### THE HABITS AND IDIOSYNCRACIES OF CHESS PLAYERS

## Chess History and Reminiscences

To Sanskrit Tschaturanza (column 1) under the head of "Kriegsspiel," A.D. 954, is affixed to Arabisch (column 10), the same year 954 appears. (NOTE. To this date of 954 I cannot help adding for once a query mark like those in which Linde's book abounds (!!)).

To Persich (column 7) 1000 (!) Fransofitch 12 Jht, English 13 Jht, Spanisch 1283, Italien 1348–1358.

To Tschinesich, Japanisch, Siamesich, Birmesich, and Tibetisch, under Aeltestes Datum Columns, 2 to 6 Unbekannt appears as well as to Tschaturanga column 1, notwithstanding the date of 954 in another place. An the above are under the one head of "Kriegsspiel."

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### SCHACHSPIEL

Under this head Italienisch is 1512, Latienisch 1525, Franzofitch 1560, Englisch 1562, Deutsch 1606, Danisch 1752–1757, Schwedisch 1784, Ungarish 1861.

Dr. Van der Linde has nothing about the Roman edict of 115 B.C., or the other three points, which first caused our desire to invite a little more attention to the subject of the probable origin of chess, viz.: (1) Alcuin and Egbert's contemporary records, with Pepin, Charlemagne, Harun, the Princess Irene, and Emperor Nicephorus, the humane enlightened and glorious Al Mamum, with his treasures of learning, Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit translations (2 3). Fortunately for the encyclopaedia writer of 1727, and the poet Pope, their articles have escaped his notice. We naturally try to discover what Bretspiel and Nerdspiel was, according to Linde's own notions, and when they ceased and chess began, both chess and Nerdspiel had been heard of and were terms used before Al Masudi and Ibn Khallekun wrote. Why does not Linde attempt to explain why Harun, Walid, Razi, Al Suli, the Khalifs, and others up to the Shahnama poem, Anna Comnena and Aben Ezra call it chess, and nothing else, and again we ask how can he reconcile his own author, Masudi's statement that Al Suli's chess was declared more beautiful than all in the Caliph's garden (he died in 946), with his own statement that chess was first known in Arabia, in 954.

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### Dr. A. VAN DER LINDE

The whole tenor of such reasoning as can be found in Linde's stupendous work, seems to rest on subtle distinctions as to the precise accuracy of the word chess, rather than to valid argument to the effect that no game resembling it ever existed before the time he fixes, yet his diagrams of the Tschaturanga which comes Vol. 1 following page 423, is exactly in accordance with the game as explained to us by Sir William Jones and Professor Duncan Forbes, though Linde seems to call it by the name of Indischer Wurfelvierschach or Indische Kriegsspiel, and there is not a single diagram of what the German writer conceives it to be other than the real Tschaturanga (Chaturanga).

NOTE. From such an assumptive writer, one would like to ask whether he had looked through the pages of Livy Polybius and Tacitus, or explored the treasures in the Fihrist, or the Eastern Works referred to by Lambe, Bland, and Forbes, as well as Dr. Hyde and Sir William Jones.

Forbes in the body of his work roughly estimates the Chaturanga at 3000 B.C., but at page xiii of appendix, he says: "The first period (of chess) is altogether of fabulous antiquity, that is, of three to five thousand years old," in fact, he seems to have been rather loose in his estimation, and not to have sufficiently distinguished between the supposed antiquity of the four sacred Vedas, the Epic poems, the Ramayana and the Mahabarata, and the Puranas. Professor Weber and Dr. Van der Linde assume a much more recent date for the Bhavishya

Purana, from which the account of the Chaturanga is mainly taken, than that assigned to it by Sir William Jones and Professor Duncan Forbes.

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The 4,098 name index already referred to includes Adam ten times and even Jesus three times, used, as it appears to me, rather for the purpose of irony, rather than valid or useful argument.

When Forbes gives the earliest chess position, known from British Museum M.S.S. Linde says Adam was the first chess player (??) to Sir F. Madden about 1,150, for the time when Gaimur wrote quoting the incident of the Earl of Devonshire and his daughter being found playing chess together, (Edgar's reign 958 to 975). Linde says Madden about it "Keinen Pfifferling werth." In another place he says, "Forbes natte der Freicheut," "Insolence, Impudence, Audaciousness, Boldness."

It is not pleasing to English ears to be told that George Walker is a humbug and a snob. Professor Duncan Forbes the same, and William Lewis something worse, and to find notes of exclamation and of queries (! ! ?), instead of argument opposed to the statements of such writers as Dr. Hyde, Sir William Jones, the Rev. R. Lambe, Sir Frederic Madden, and Mr. Bland.

Linde's dealing with Forbes' statement concerning his examination of the copies of the Shahnama in the British Museum, puts a crowning touch on his arbitrary and insulting style and furnishes an example of his notions of courtesy and argument.

Forbes in a reply to Alpha having pledged his truth and honour that the account of the moves and pieces in the copies of the Shahnama were precisely as he had given them, Linde after honour has (!)

Forbes' statement runs as follows:

9th November, 1855, (1860, p. 56,) Zu Antworten. "My answer to Alpha is that the M.S.S. from which I made (not derived) my translations describing the moves of the pieces are precisely those I mentioned, viz., No. 18188 and No. 7724 preserved in the British Museum. At the same time I briefly consulted some nine or ten other M.S.S. of the Shahnama in the British Museum as well as Macan's printed edition, yea more, I consulted the so called copy of great antiquity alluded to by Alpha before it came to the Museum. Well, in all of these, with, I believe, only one exception, the account of the moves does occur exactly (!) as I have given them, always excepting or rather excluding a couplet about two camels (die namliche nicht in die Bude des Tachenspielers passten es weiter unten) Und nun geht es echt fesuitisch weiter, Alpha denies the existence (!) (A hat in Gegentheil Hyde I, p. 63 Citirt) of the account of the moves in every copy of the Shahnama. I, on the other hand pledge my truth and honour (!! Linde), that the account of the moves does occur in every one of the manuscripts as well as in Macan's printed edition (Vgl. App. p. x. lin. 6 unt.). The misconception on the part of Alpha arose from a very simple (:) circumstance. In Firdausi's account of the game the story happens to be interrupted (:) in the middle of the insertion of two other long stories, as we often see in the Arabian nights.

"In matters of this sort it is only the truth that offends.

"(Man vergleiche hierzu noch seine Schnapserklurung der Weisheit des Buzurdschmir, p. 54.)"

Forbes also adds p. 56. And I am quite ready to point out the passage in all of them to any gentleman and scholar who may have the least doubt on the matter.

Historians of the 7th, 8th and 9th centuries who lived before Masudi, deemed the game worthy of notice and

recommendation, Razi and Firdausi thought so too, and Hippocrates and Galen before them refer very favourably to its advantages, describing it as beneficial in many ailments, and we may reasonably assume that they at least, as well as the poets and philosophers before them, back to the fifth century B.C. deemed the game passing in their minds, and the invention of which they were wont to speculate on, as one of some interest, beauty and significance and worthy of appreciation then as it has been in succeeding ages.

Once more, no example is given of his Kriegsspiel, Nerdspiel, Wulfervierschach, Trictrac, or any Spiel or game implied under the word Bretspiel, the last named being moreover a general term for games played on a chess board, rather than a distinctive appellation for a particular species of game or indication of the pieces or value of forces employed in it.

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### NERDSPEIL

Masudi, born at Bagdad 870, died at Cairo in 959, is Linde's great authority. Linde quotes or deduces from him the following:

"Die alten Hindus wohlten einen Konig uber sich Burahman Dieser regierte, bis er starb, 366 (sic) Jahre, Seine Nackkommen, heisen Brahminen Sein Sohn et Bahbud unter dessen Regierung das Nerdspiel (Gildermeister ubersetzt duodecim scriptorum ludus) ein bloss auf Zufall und nicht auf Scharfsinn beruhendes Gluckspiel erfinden wurde regierte loo Jahre, Andere sagen, dass Azdeshir ibn Balek das Nerdspiel erfund."

Again "Ardashirer Ibn Balek, der Stammvater der letzten persischen Dynastie, erfund das Nerdspiel, das daher nerdashir, (also nerd Ardashirer) genanut wurde."

The copious Index of Linde's work of 4,098 items, also refers Nerdspiel to page 6, but the word does not appear there and the above is all he tells us about his Nerdspiel.

Among the 540 diagrams contained in his work of 1,118 pages, as already observed, there is no representation of Nerdspiel.

The writer hopes to submit an analysis of these diagrams, and of the contents and conclusions of Linde's work in a supplemental pamphlet of 64 pages, price one shilling, in order to notice the manifold inconsistencies contained in it, as well as the wholesale aspersions upon the English historians.

Linde's Book. It includes notice of Hoyle's games, Complete Gamesters, Magazines and trifling publications, down to A.B.C. for a Lady and whatever we may think of the connexion of events and lucidity of his arguments, it may be pronounced an extraordinary monument and memorial of industry.

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### CHESS IN ITALY

Forbes thinks it probable that chess was known in Italy before or during the ninth century, and suggests that it was probably received there from the Saracens rather than the Greeks. The story of Peter Damianus the Cardinal, (Ravenna) who lived 1007 to 1072, and his reproof of the Bishop for playing chess, is given by both of the writers, Forbes and Linde.

NOTE. Swiss in vol. 11, page 77, on the authority of Verci, says that the following adventure happened to a

## Chess History and Reminiscences

Bishop of Florence, who, according to Ughelli (*Ital Sac tem* 3), was Gerard, who died in 1061. It is told by Damianus, Bishop of Ostia and Cardinal in his epistles, and is confirmed by Baronius and Lohner. These two prelates were travelling together, and on a certain evening when they arrived at their resting-place, Damianus withdrew to the cell of a neighbouring priest, in order to spend the time in a pious manner, but the Florentine played at chess all night among seculars or laymen, in a large house of entertainment. When in the morning the Cardinal was made acquainted with this, he sharply reproved the prelate, who endeavoured to excuse himself by saying that chess was not prohibited, like dice. Dice, said he, are prohibited by the canon laws; chess is tacitly permitted. To which the zealous Cardinal replied the canons do not speak of chess, but both kinds of games are expressed under the comprehensive name of Alea. Therefore, when the canon prohibits the Alea, and does not expressly mention chess, it is undoubtedly evident that both kinds of games, expressed in one word and sentence, are thereby equally condemned.

The Bishop who was very good-natured stood corrected, and submitted cheerfully to the penance imposed on him by the Cardinal, which was: that he should thrice repeat the psalter of David, and wash the feet of twelve poor men, likewise bestowing certain alms on them, and treating them to a good dinner, in order that he might thus, for the glory of God and the benefit of the poor, employ those hands which he had made use of in playing the game.

It must have taken some considerable time before the game became so common as to be played at houses of entertainment by seculars or laymen.