

EDGE FREDERICK MILNES

THE EXPLOITS AND
TRIUMPHS, IN EUROPE, OF
PAUL MORPHY, THE CHESS
CHAMPION

Frederick Edge

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in Europe, of Paul Morphy,
the Chess Champion**

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PREFACE

I am much indebted, in the following pages, to the kind assistance of that able writer and veteran chess-player, Mr. George Walker, who has furnished me with most of the very interesting and valuable information contained in the fourth chapter of this work. I am likewise under obligations to Herr Löwenthal for many anecdotes relating to chess celebrities of the past, and other information; and also to Mr. George Medley, Honorary Secretary of the London Chess Club, and Mr. Ries, of the Divan.

The cuts with which this work is embellished have been engraved by the well-known Brothers Dalziel. The portrait of Paul Morphy, copied from a photograph taken shortly after his arrival in London last year, is an excellent likeness.

The portraits of Messrs. Staunton, Boden, Anderssen, and Löwenthal, are copies of photographs, for which they sat at the Manchester Meeting, in 1857. The originals of Messrs. Saint Amant and Harrwitz are admirably executed lithographs of those gentlemen, taken about four years ago, and that of Mr. Mongredieu is copied from a photograph kindly lent for the purpose.

I am under great obligations to Mr. Lewis, who came to London expressly to sit for his likeness; and I feel assured that my readers will value this "very form and feature" of an amateur who was famous before Labourdonnais was known outside the Régence; and whose works are found in every chess-player's library.

I had considerable difficulty in obtaining the portrait of Mr. George Walker. Photographs, lithographs, etc., of that most popular of all chess writers, did not exist, and many friends prophesied that his likeness would not be in my book. But I importuned him so that he relented, and confided to my care an oil painting, for which he sat five years ago, and which was the only portrait of him in existence.

My readers can judge of the resemblance of the other cuts by the portrait of Paul Morphy. I only wish my story was as good.

CHAPTER I

MORPHY'S FIRST GAMES

Paul Morphy's father, Judge Morphy, of the Supreme Court of Louisiana, beguiled his leisure hours with the fascinations of Chess, and, finding a precocious aptitude for the game in his son, he taught him the moves and the value of the various pieces. In the language of somebody, —

"To teach the young Paul chess,
His leisure he'd employ;
Until, at last, the old man
Was beaten by the boy."

I have here spoilt a very pretty story. The report in chess circles is, that the young Paul learned the moves from seeing his father play with his uncle, Mr. Ernest Morphy, long ranking amongst the first players in the Union, and one of the brightest living ornaments of American chess. One evening — so runs the tale — this gentleman awaited the arrival of the Judge, when Master Paul impudently offered to be his antagonist. What was the uncle's astonishment at finding the stripling a match for his deepest combinations, and what the father's surprise on discovering a very Philidor in his son of ten years! Deschappelles became a first-rate player in three days, at the age of something like thirty. Nobody ever believed the statement, not even Deschappelles himself, although his biographer declares he had told the lie so often that he at last forgot the facts of the case. But the story about Morphy beats the Deschappelles story in the proportion of thirty to ten. I sorrowfully confess that my hero's unromantic regard for truth makes him characterize the above statement as a humbug and an impossibility.

Paul's genius for Chess was, very properly, not permitted to interfere with his educational pursuits. At college (in South Carolina) until eighteen years of age, he had but little time for indulgence in his favorite game, nor did he find any one capable of contending with him. When the vacations allowed of his playing against such adepts as his father and uncle, or such well-known paladins as Mr. Ernest Rousseau, of New Orleans, and Judge Meek, of Alabama, he soon showed himself superior to all antagonists. In the autumn of 1849, Herr Löwenthal, the celebrated Hungarian player, visited the Crescent City, and out of three games against the young Paul, then but twelve years old, he lost two and drew one. It is but reasonable to suppose that the desire of atoning for this defeat had something to do with Herr Löwenthal's challenging his youthful victor, on his arrival last year in Europe.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST AMERICAN CHESS CONGRESS

A circular was issued by the New York Chess Club, in the month of April, 1857, "for the purpose of ascertaining the feasibility and propriety of a general assemblage of the chess players resident in America." This "met with a hearty and zealous response from the amateurs and clubs of the United States. So favorable was the feeling everywhere manifested, that it was deemed advisable to proceed with the undertaking, and to complete at once the preliminary arrangements."¹ In consideration of the movement having been initiated by the New York Chess Club, it was conceded that the meeting should take place in that city.

Some of the founders of the New York Chess Club still live to do honor to the game. I believe that Mr. James Thompson and Colonel Mead suckled the bantling in times of yore, sometimes forming the entire of the Club without assistance. In that day of small things, I believe, too, they defeated the Norfolk (Va.) Club, proving themselves just two too many for their opponents. Then they travelled about from house to house, as their members increased, with the arrival of Mr. Charles H. Stanley, Mr. Frederick Perrin, and others. About 1855 or 1856, the Club made the acquisition of two enterprising young players, Mr. Theodore Lichtenhein and Mr. Daniel W. Fiske; and to the latter gentleman is due the credit of first suggesting this Chess Congress, which made known to fame the genius of Paul Morphy.

In the summer of 1857, being then engaged on the New York Herald, I used occasionally to tumble into the basement of an edifice opposite the newspaper office, where a jolly, fat German, with a never-to-be-remembered name, regaled his visitors upon sausages and "lager." Here the members of the Chess Club were wont to congregate; for the landlord had provided chessmen and boards as an inducement to visitors.

One afternoon being engaged in a game with a brother reporter, a gentleman, whom I subsequently learned was Mr. Theodore Lichtenhein, stepped up to us, and put into our hands the prospectus of the approaching Chess Congress, stating his opinion that an event of so much importance merited newspaper publicity. So began my acquaintance with American chess amateurs. Although possessing but little skill as a player, I had a strong liking for the game, and determined that every thing in my power should be done to render the meeting successful.

My visits to the saloon, and eventually to the Club, became frequent, and the Committee of Management, finding that I both could and would work, did me the honor of appointing me one of the secretaries.

The Congress was advertised to open on the 6th of October, but players began to arrive some weeks previously. First of all came Judge Meek, of Alabama, a truly imposing specimen of a man. Soon after him followed Mr. Louis Paulsen, from Dubuque, Iowa, whose astonishing blindfold feats out West were the theme of general talk, and almost total disbelief, amongst Eastern players. From Judge Meek we first heard of Paul Morphy's wondrous strength. He told the New York Club that if the youthful Louisianian entered the tournament, he would infallibly wrest the palm of victory from all competition.

We were much afraid, nevertheless, that Mr. Morphy would be unable to quit his legal studies for the purpose of attending the Congress, but when Mr. Fiske announced the receipt of a telegraphic despatch, which stated that he was *en route*, everybody hailed the news with satisfaction. Mr. Paulsen now came to the support of Judge Meek, and declared that Paul Morphy would carry off the first prize in the tournament; giving, as the grounds of his opinion, some two or three published games

¹ Prospectus of "The National Chess Congress."

of the young Louisianian, which he considered worthy to rank with the finest master-pieces of chess strategy. Benignant fate brought the young hero safely to New York, some two days before the assembling of the Congress.

Who that was present that evening does not remember Paul Morphy's first appearance at the New York Chess Club? The secretary, Mr. Frederick Perrin, valorously offered to be his first antagonist, and presented about the same resistance as a musquito to an avalanche. Then who should enter the room but the warrior Stanley, tomahawk in one hand and the scalps of Schulten and Rousseau in the other. Loud cries were made for "Stanley! Stanley!" and Mr. Perrin resigned his seat to the new comer, in deference to so general a request. Thus commenced a contest, or rather a succession of contests, in which Mr. Stanley was indeed astonished. "Mate" followed upon "mate," until he arose from his chair in bewildered defeat.

The following day, the assembled delegates and amateurs from the various clubs, organized the Congress by the election of a president, in the person of Judge Meek, with Mr. Fiske as secretary, four assistant secretaries, marshals, treasurer, etc. All these matters of detail, as well as the games played, the laws passed, etc., etc., will eventually appear in the long looked for "Book of the Congress," forthcoming with the completion of the "British Museum Catalogue."

In the absence of the "Book of the Congress," I must give a slight sketch of its proceedings, in order to trace the career of Paul Morphy *ab initio*. After taking possession of the magnificent hall which the New York Committee of Management had chosen for the meeting, the sixteen contestants in the Grand Tournament, proceeded to pair themselves off by lot. Never was fate more propitious than on this occasion in coupling the antagonists. It is obvious, that however apparently equal in strength two opponents may be, one will prove stronger than the other. This is an axiom requiring no proof. Out of sixteen, one is better than the rest, and one out of the remaining fifteen is stronger than the fourteen others. The latter player may be drawn in the first round of the tourney with the former, and though he stand incomparably the superior of all but one, he loses every chance of a prize by being put immediately *hors du combat*.

Amongst the sixteen players who entered the lists, two were unmistakably the strongest, namely, Messrs. Morphy and Paulsen; and much fear was manifested lest they might be drawn together, in the first round. Such, however, was not the case. Mr. Paulsen was coupled with Mr. Dennis Julien, the well-known problem maker, and a gentleman whose hospitality to chess players scarcely requires praise from me. Mr. Julien had allowed his name to be entered in the Grand Tournament in the absence of the representative of Connecticut, Mr. S. R. Calthrop, but the latter player arriving shortly after, Mr. Julien was but too happy to resign in his favor. Mr. Morphy's antagonist was Mr. James Thompson, of New York, a gentleman who finished his chess education at the Café de la Régence, and the London Chess Divan, noted for the brilliancy and daring of his attack, and his pertinacity in playing the Evans' Gambit wherever he has a chance. If Mr. Thompson had not been pitted against such a terrible opponent, in the first round, he would have tested the powers of some of the other players.

Mr. Morphy's second opponent was Judge Meek. As they took their seats opposite each other, one thought of David and Goliath; not that the Judge gasconaded in any wise after the fashion of the tall Philistine, for modesty adorns all his actions; but there was as much difference in cubic contents between the two antagonists, as between the son of Jesse and the bully of Gath, and in both cases the little one came out biggest. Judge Meek sat down with an evident conviction of the result, and although he assured his youthful opponent, that if he continued mating him without ever allowing him the least chance, he would put him in his pocket, he consoled himself with the reflection that Paul Morphy would serve everybody else as he served him.

Hitherto our hero had won every game. In the third round he encountered the strongest player of the New York Club, Mr. Theodore Lichtenhein, a gentleman who had formerly been President of the Circle des Echecs at Königsburg in Prussia, and an admirable exponent of the Berlin school

of play. Mr. Lichtenhein eventually carried off the third prize in the tournament, and although he did not win any game from Mr. Morphy, he succeeded in effecting "a draw," which, against such a terrible enemy, is almost worthy of being esteemed a victory.

Mr. Paulsen had also been successful in the first and second rounds without losing or drawing a single game, and, as if to keep even with his great rival, he, too, had made "a draw" in the third section of the tournament – with Dr. Raphael, of Kentucky. Now was to be decided the championship of the New World, and notwithstanding that the majority anticipated the result, yet many of the spectators thought that the Western knight might prove a hard nut for Morphy to crack. Mr. Paulsen's game is steady and analytical to a nicety. Modelling his operations on profound acquaintance with Philidor, he makes as much out of his Pawns as most others of their Pieces. In reply to Mons. de Rivière, I once heard Morphy say, "Mr. Paulsen never makes an oversight; I sometimes do."

It is only justice to Mr. Paulsen to state, that he never for one moment imagined that he would beat Mr. Morphy. So exalted was his appreciation of the latter's wondrous powers of combination, that he has been frequently heard to declare – "If Anderssen and Staunton were here, they would stand no chance with Paul Morphy; and he would beat Philidor and Labourdonnais too, if they were alive." And when, after the termination of the Congress, Mr. Morphy offered Pawn and Move to all and every player in America, Mr. Paulsen declared that he could easily give those odds to him. But this invariable confession of inferiority did not at all interfere with his doing the utmost to become victor, although supremacy was only to be decided by one player scoring five games. If I recollect rightly, it was in the third game that Mr. Morphy committed an error, which spoiled one of the finest combinations ever seen on a chess-board. This combination consisted of some eighteen or twenty moves, and its starting point was one of those daring sacrifices which European players dignify with the title "à la Morphy." Certain of the inevitable result, (*humanum est erraret* almost loses its signification when applied to his combinations,) our hero played rapidly, and misplaced a move. The result was, loss of attack and a piece, and apparently of the game; the most ardent admirer of Paul Morphy believed it was impossible for him to avoid defeat. But though angry with himself for his carelessness, he was not disheartened, but set to work with courage, and effected "a draw." The latter part of this game is a masterpiece of perseverance and strategy. The result of the tournament is well known. Mr. Morphy won five games, drew one, and lost one in the concluding section – only one battle lost during the entire campaign. The annals of chess do not furnish a similar victory.

CHAPTER III

MORPHY PREPARES TO START FOR EUROPE

Arriving in Europe three months before Mr. Morphy, I was in some sort, – not from any consent or knowledge on his part, his *avant courier*; and the fact of my having been one of the Secretaries at the New York Chess Congress, joined to my acquaintance with him, afforded me the opportunity of conversing frequently with prominent English players in reference to this new meteor in the chess firmament.

Shortly after my arrival in London, I called upon the Secretary of the St. George's Chess Club, Thomas Hampton, Esq., and introduced myself to him. Chess is a bond of brotherhood amongst all lovers of the noble game, as perfect as free masonry. It is a leveller of rank – title, wealth, nationality, politics, religion – all are forgotten across the board. Every chess player recognizes this, and none more so than Mr. Hampton, who gave me the warmest of welcomes. He told me that every Saturday there was a full attendance of members, and kindly invited me to visit the club on that day, promising to introduce me to Mr. Staunton. I was but too happy to accept this invitation, being desirous of learning how far the prowess of Paul Morphy was appreciated by one so eminent in the chess world.

My acquaintance with the young American was a passport of general interest to all present on the following Saturday. In addition to Mr. Staunton, I met there Herr Falkbeer, Messrs. Barnes, Bird, "Alter," and other luminaries, and many were the questions asked in reference to Mr. Morphy. But I am bound to say that the feeling with which he was regarded in the United States was not participated in by English players. I was told by one gentleman – "Mr. Morphy's games are very pretty, but they will not bear the test of analysis." Another said – and his opinion was universally endorsed – "It is quite possible that Mr. Morphy may arrive at the highest rank, nay, even that he may become a second Labourdonnais, but he cannot have the strength his admiring countrymen wish to believe. Chess requires many long years of attentive study, and frequent play with the best players, and neither of these your friend has had. Depend upon it he will find European amateurs very different opponents from those he has hitherto encountered." This rather nettled me, but it was reasonable and just. Any one possessing the slightest acquaintance with the game knows that it partakes more of hard, laborious application to arrive at first-rate skill, than of mere pastime. Very few of Morphy's games had been seen in Europe, and his opponents were not, certainly, of a class to rank with the Stauntons, Löwenthals, and Anderssens of the Old World. Was it reasonable to suppose that a youth, just out of his teens, who had devoted but little time to chess, and who was about to meet first-rate players for the first time, should possess the experience and lore of men double his age? At the present time, now that he has unmistakably proved himself the superior of all living players, I feel utterly at a loss to solve the problem of his skill. At college, until eighteen years old, what time could he find there, except out of school hours, for the required practice, and what antagonists worthy of him? From eighteen to twenty, he was engaged in reading for the bar. During that period he was as frequent a visitor at the chess club as circumstances would permit, but certainly not sufficiently so to increase his strength. Who were his antagonists? His father had almost entirely abandoned chess; Mr. Ernest Morphy had settled in "the West," and Mr. Rousseau, absorbed in the sterner duties of life, held the same relation to the game as Mr. Lewis in England. To one and all of his opponents, except these gentlemen, he could give the rook; and playing at odds is somewhat different from contending with even players. He met strong players for the first time at New York. Paulsen, Lichtenhein, Thompson, Montgomery, Marache were all northern players, and new to him, and vastly superior to the antagonists he had previously encountered. There is but one way to account for his annihilation of all precedent. His skill is intuitive, and I doubt much whether his prodigious memory has been of assistance to him. In answer to a gentleman in Paris as to whether he had not studied many works on chess, I heard him

state that no author had been of much value to him, and that he was astonished at finding various positions and solutions given as novel – certain moves producing certain results, etc., *for that he had made the same deductions himself, as necessary consequences*. In like manner, Newton demonstrated, in his own mind, the problems of Euclid, the enunciations only being given; and I can think of no more suitable epithet for Morphy than to call him "the Newton of Chess."

But *revenons à nos moutons*. Morphy's achievements at the Congress in New York induced many to believe that America now possessed a champion capable of contending with the proficients of Europe, and it was proposed that he should be backed by the American Chess Association against any player who would take up the challenge. I am sorry to say that the action of certain prominent men prevented the gauntlet being thrown down. These gentlemen said, "He beats us because he is better versed in the openings, but such players as Löwenthal and Harrwitz will be too strong for him. He wants experience, and were we to make this national challenge, we should appear ridiculous when our champion is defeated, which he certainly would be." The proposal, however, got noised abroad, and the following paragraph appeared, in consequence, in the Illustrated London News:

"CHALLENGE TO EUROPEAN CHESS PLAYERS."²

"The American Chess Association, it is reported, are about to challenge any player in Europe to contest a match with the young victor in the late passage at arms, for from \$2,000 to \$5,000 a side, the place of meeting being New York. If the battleground were to be London or Paris, there can be little doubt, we apprehend, that a European champion would be found; but the best players in Europe are not chess professionals, but have other and more serious avocations, the interests of which forbid such an expenditure of time as is required for a voyage to the United States and back again."

I would say, by way of parenthesis, that such a being as a professional chess player does not exist in the United States. Paulsen is a tobacco broker, with tendencies to speculating in "corner lots." (Western men know what that means.) Lichtenhein deals in dry-goods, dry wines and Italian opera; Thompson is the proprietor of a magnificent restaurant; Colonel Mead devotes himself to democratic cabals at the New York Hotel; Fiske is an admixture of the Chess Monthly, the Astor Library and Scandinavian literature; Perrin and Marache are bothered daily with banks, "bears" and "bulls." Chess professionals, indeed! they do not grow in the United States.

Mr. Morphy returned to his native city without any further action having been taken, but the New Orleans Chess Club determined that the challenge should be made, and they addressed the following letter to Mr. Staunton, at the commencement of last year:

New Orleans, February 4, 1858.

Howard Staunton, Esq.,

Sir, – On behalf of the New Orleans Chess Club, and in compliance with the instructions of that body, we, the undersigned committee, have the honor to invite you to visit our city, and there meet Mr. Paul Morphy in a chess match. In transmitting this invitation, permit us to observe, that we are prompted no less by the desire to become personally acquainted with one whom we have so long admired, than by the very natural anxiety to ascertain the strength of our American players by the decisive criterion of actual conflict over the board.

² Illustrated London News, December 26th, 1857.

We can see no valid reason why an exercise so intellectual and ennobling as chess, should be excluded from the generous rivalry which exists between the Old and the New World, in all branches of human knowledge and industry. That the spirit of emulation from which this rivalry arises has not, hitherto, been made to embrace our chivalrous game, may be mainly ascribed to the fact that, although the general attention paid to chess in the United States during the last fifteen years has produced a number of fine players, yet their relative force remained undetermined, and none could assert an indisputable right to pre-eminence. The late Chess Congress has, however, removed this obstacle, by finally settling the claims of the several aspirants to the championship; and it must now be a matter of general desire to fix, by actual contest with the best European amateurs, the rank which American players shall hold in the hierarchy of chess.

For this purpose it was suggested that Mr. Morphy, the winner at the late Congress and the present American champion, should cross the ocean, and boldly encounter the distinguished magnates of the transatlantic chess circles; but it unfortunately happens that serious family reasons forbid Mr. Morphy, for the present, to entertain the thought of visiting Europe. It, therefore, becomes necessary to arrange, if possible, a meeting between the latter and the acknowledged European champion, in regard to whom there can be no scope for choice or hesitation – the common voice of the chess world pronounces your name; and to us it is a subject of congratulation that the sceptre of transatlantic chess is wielded by one who, with respect to regularity of communication between the two countries, and for other reasons, enjoys facilities for accepting our invitation possessed by no other European player.

We take the liberty herewith to inclose a series of proposed "terms of the match," which has been drawn up, not for the purpose of imposing conditions, but with a view to obviate the necessity of repeated correspondence. We have been studious to make these terms as equitable as possible, and to include all matters upon which contestation was likely to arise. You are respectfully invited to suggest any alterations which you may deem advisable, not only in the minor points embraced, but also as to the amount of the stakes, the time fixed for the commencement of the match, &c., &c.

Fully subscribing to the wisdom of the proposal made by you in the introduction to the "Book of the Tournament," we beg leave to express our entire willingness to insert a clause providing that "one-half at least" (or even *all*) "of the games shall be *open* ones."

In conclusion, Sir, receive the assurance that it will afford us extreme pleasure to welcome among us a gentleman, who is as greatly admired for his powers in play as he is esteemed for his many and valuable contributions to the literature of chess.

Hoping soon to receive a favorable answer, we remain, with distinguished regard, your obedient servants,

E. W. Halsey,	Chas. A. Maurian, Jr.,
Francis Michinard,	P. E. Bonford,
E. Pardey.	

TERMS OF THE MATCH

1. The amount of the stakes, on each side, to be five thousand dollars, and the winner of the first eleven games to be declared the victor, and entitled to the stakes.
2. The match to be played in the city of New Orleans.
3. Should the English player lose the match, the sum of one thousand dollars (£200) to be paid to him out of the stakes, in reimbursement of the expenses incurred by him in accepting this challenge.
4. The games to be conducted in accordance with the rules laid down in Mr. Staunton's "Chess Player's Handbook."
5. The parties to play with Staunton chessmen of the usual club-size, and on a board of corresponding dimensions.
6. The match to be commenced on or about the first of May, 1858, (or on any other day during the present year most agreeable to Mr. Staunton,) and to be continued at not less than four sittings each week.
7. In order that the stay of the English player in New Orleans be not unnecessarily prolonged, he shall have the right to fix the hours of play at from ten o'clock, A. M., to two, P. M., and from six to ten o'clock, P. M.
8. The time occupied in deliberating on any move, shall not exceed thirty minutes.
9. The right to publish the games is reserved exclusively to the contestants, subject only to such private arrangements as they may agree upon.
10. The stakes on the part of Mr. Staunton to be deposited prior to the commencement of the match in the hands of – ; and those on the part of Mr. Morphy, in the hands of Eugene Rousseau, Esq., cashier of the Citizen's Bank of Louisiana.

On the 3d of April, Mr. Staunton replied to this very flattering communication as follows, through the "Illustrated London News: " —

"Proposed Chess Match between England and America for One Thousand Pounds a Side. – We have been favored with a copy of the *defi* which the friends of Mr. Paul Morphy, the chess champion of the United States, have transmitted to Mr. Staunton. The terms of this cartel are distinguished by extreme courtesy, and with one notable exception, by extreme liberality also. The exception in question, however, (we refer to the clause which stipulates that the combat shall take place in New Orleans!) appears to us utterly fatal to the match; and we must confess our astonishment that the intelligent gentlemen who drew up the conditions did not themselves discover this. Could it possibly escape their penetration, that if Mr. Paul Morphy, a young gentleman without family ties or professional claims upon his attention, finds it inconvenient to anticipate, by a few months, an intended voyage to Europe, his proposed antagonist, who is well known for years to have been compelled, by laborious literary occupation, to abandon the practice of chess beyond the indulgence of an occasional game, must find it not merely inconvenient, but positively impracticable, to cast aside all engagements, and undertake a journey of many thousand miles for the sake of a chess-encounter? Surely the idea of such a sacrifice is not admissible for a single moment. If Mr. Morphy – for whose skill we entertain the liveliest admiration – be desirous to win his spurs among the chess chivalry of Europe, he must take advantage of his purposed visit next year; he will then meet in this country, in France, in Germany, and in Russia, many champions

whose names must be as household words to him, ready to test and do honor to his prowess."

Can this mean aught else than, "Come over to England and I will play you?"

CHAPTER IV

CHESS IN ENGLAND

Most of us know how "Box," when called upon by "Cox," to give explanations of the improper attentions he (Box) was paying to C.'s wife, hums and haws and begins, "Towards the close of the sixteenth century;" when Cox very properly cries out, "What the deuce has the sixteenth century to do with my wife?" Many of my readers may, like Cox, want to know what a great deal my book contains has to do with Paul Morphy; all I have to say, in reply, is, – if you don't like it, skip it; more especially the following thirty pages, which, nevertheless, will be interesting to all chess-players.

Chess seems to have first acquired social importance in England during Philidor's residence in that country. Judging from the number of titled names attached to his work as subscribers, the British aristocracy were, in his time, much given to the game, but "nous avons changé tout cela," and the English nobility nowadays, with but a few notable exceptions, confine their abilities to "Tattersall's" and "Aunt Sally."

"What a fall was there, my countrymen!"

Surely the "King of Games," which has enlisted amongst its votaries such names as that of the victor of Culloden, and his rival, Maréchal Saxe; without enumerating those of all the greatest warriors of many centuries, might still offer inducements to their comparatively unknown descendants. We have thousands of men, composing the British aristocracy, at a loss to get rid of their time; sauntering down to their clubs at mid-day; listlessly turning over the leaves of magazines and reviews, until their dinner-hour arrives. Why, in the name of common sense, do not these men learn something of chess, and thus provide themselves with a pastime which not merely hastens Time's chariot-wheels, but quickens the intellect? One gets tired of billiards, cards, horse-racing, etc., but your chess-player becomes more enamored of his game, the more he knows of it.

It may have been that gentlemen and nobles affixed their names to Philidor's book, out of compliment or charity, but it is doubtful whether their descendants would now do so, even from those considerations. Must we measure the capacity of dukes and lords by that intellectual standard, "Aunt Sally?"

Philidor certainly did much for chess, particularly in England. He possessed peculiar advantages for so doing. In the first place he had true talent; his powers for playing blindfold excited extraordinary interest at the time, not merely amongst chess players, but especially with the titled crowd. His political antecedents increased the general interest, and, last and best of all, he was a foreigner. If Philidor had been an Englishman he would hardly have sold a copy of his book.

Philidor organized a chess club in London, which met at Parsloe's Coffee House, St. James street. At the present day little is known of that early association, and we cannot even tell whether the members were numerous. After his death, chess seems to have languished; Parsloe's club dragged on its existence during some years, dying from inanition about 1825. The London Chess Club, first organized in 1807, kept alive the sacred fire; but that was the only community in England during the first quarter of this century where the game was publicly played. Some years after the establishment of the London, the Edinburgh Chess Club started into existence. In 1833, a great impetus was given to the game by the commencement of a weekly chess article in the columns of "Bell's Life in London." Amateurs now had an organ which could record their achievements; men hitherto unknown beyond their private circles felt, that the opportunity was afforded them to become famous throughout the country, and provincial clubs started up here and there. Chess players cannot but regard that paper as a very nursing mother for Caïssa, and certainly never hear it mentioned but their thoughts revert to the veteran – George Walker. I once heard that gentleman relate the following anecdote as a proof of how little was known of chess, in England, previous to the year 1833.

Travelling towards the north somewhere about that period, he put up one night at a hotel in Stratford-upon-Avon. Now any man with music or poetry in his soul, would, under such circumstances, wander towards the home of Shakspeare, or to his last resting-place; provided always that fear of rheumatism, or influenza, did not render him regardless of the rain which then fell "like cats and dogs." How to pass the evening was the question. Only one other traveller in the coffee-room, and he as uncommunicative as Englishmen proverbially are. Mr. Walker did not feel like going to bed at seven o'clock in the evening, and the idea of throwing out "a feeler" struck him as interesting. "Did Traveller play chess?" Traveller did. "Would he have a game?" Yes, he would. The waiter is thereupon summoned, and ordered to bring in a set of chessmen. Waiter, strongly suspicious that Mr. Walker means skittles, finally awaked to consciousness, and, with a smile of triumph, produces a backgammon board.

The very idea of an opponent obliterated all fear of the weather in Mr. Walker's breast, and he sallied forth in quest of the desired pieces. Toyshops, libraries, etc., were entered, but the proprietors scarcely understood what was asked of them, and Mr. W. finally returned to the inn to dispatch "Boots" to the solicitor, doctor, and neighboring gentry – but all to no purpose. Thereupon mine host suggested a note to the parson, but that individual having just rendered himself famous for all time by cutting down Shakspeare's mulberry tree, Mr. Walker replied that such a man could not possibly know anything of the game, and it would be useless to send to him. So the two travellers were forced to console themselves with the intricacies of draughts.

After the death of Philidor, the strongest players were Sarratt, De Bourblanc, Lewis and Parkinson. Sarratt and Mr. Lewis may be looked upon as chess professors. We all know the story of the former's playing with the great Napoleon, and the struggle between pride and courtesy (very silly courtesy, indeed!) finally overcome by Sarratt's drawing every game. This could not have been a satisfactory result to the "Little Corporal," for he never seemed partial to leaving things *in statu quo ante bellum*. Sarratt was a schoolmaster, Parkinson an architect, and Mr. Lewis commenced life as a merchant's clerk, and eventually embarked in the manufacture of piano fortes. This information has nothing whatever to do with the reputation of the above gentlemen, as successors of Philidor, and I only mention it because chess players, like other men, are not adverse to hearing what does not concern them.

The continental blockade and long wars with Napoleon, isolated England from the rest of the world, and completed the decay and fall of chess for a time. But the game did not languish in France and Germany. About 1820, the Holy Alliance (of Sovereigns against the people) began playing its pranks: proscribed fugitives, martyrs to liberty —*soi disant* and otherwise – came over to England in shoals, and amongst them were to be found thorough adepts in the mysteries of chess. These refugees rekindled the fire in Britain. They brought with them new and unknown German and Italian works, and made Englishmen acquainted with far more extended information than could be found in Philidor's meagre work.

Before we enter on the new era of chess, I may add for the benefit of such of my readers as are not "up" in its history, that Lewis was the pupil of Sarratt, and McDonnell the pupil of Lewis. It is difficult, from the paucity of existing *data*, to judge of the strength of former players as compared with modern examples. Mr. Lewis had been accustomed at one time to give McDonnell pawn and two; but, when these odds became too heavy, he declined playing longer, and may be considered to have retired from the arena. Mr. Walker thinks that, in their best play, Messrs. Sarratt and Lewis were a pawn below Morphy, and he ranks the latter with Labourdonnais and McDonnell, stating his belief that the two latter would have played up to a much higher standard if provoked by defeat. For my own part, I think it is indisputable that the reputation of these two players is, at this day, entirely based on their eighty published games, and when Herr Löwenthal's much looked-for collection of Morphy's contests is published, we shall then be enabled to judge of the American's strength, as compared with those celebrated masters.

The influx of foreigners into London was introductory to the establishment of numerous chess circles in different coffee houses. Hundreds of "exiled patriots," bearded Poles and Italians, congregated together to smoke and play chess, and soon infused a general passion for the game amongst the Londoners. The first room specially devoted to chess, of which we have any account, was one opened by Mr. Gliddon, and this led to the establishment of the London Chess Divan.

THE LONDON CHESS DIVAN

What chess player has not heard of the far-famed resort of the devotees of Caïssa? The Café de la Régence may be the Mecca of chess, but the Divan is indisputably its Medina. Chess Clubs have risen and fallen, and the fortunes of the survivors have waxed or waned; but the Divan flourishes in spring-tide glory, the *Forum Romanum* for players of every clime and strength. Now my readers must not suppose that I am about to attempt a history of the "Divan in the Strand," as the Cockneys call it; for I should then have to write the history of modern European chess. I merely intend a sketch, from which they will learn with how much reverence that classic spot is to be regarded.

Somewhere about the year 1820, a tobacconist, named Gliddon, opened a room in the rear of his shop, King Street, Covent Garden, which he fitted up in Oriental style, and supplied with papers, chess periodicals and chess-boards, calling the establishment "Gliddon's Divan." Amongst his patrons was a Mr. Bernhard Ries, who soon perceived that there was room in London for a similar undertaking on a much larger scale. He accordingly opened a grand chess saloon in the building now occupied by the Divan. This was so far back as 1828. It was, at first, on the ground-floor, in the room known as Simpson's Restaurant, but when Mr. Ries gave up the establishment to his brother, the present proprietor, in 1836, that gentleman transferred the Divan to the vast saloon up stairs. In 1838, Mr. Ries (No. 2) found the Westminster Chess Club suffering from paralysis, its sinews (of war) being grievously affected. He purchased the good-will and furniture of the club, giving the members private rooms on the first floor of his house for their exclusive use. The boards and men now in use at the Divan were made expressly for the Westminster Club when first established. The members in their new locale soon found that whilst some twenty boards would be going in the public room, the game languished with them; and in the course of two years the club broke up and became absorbed in the Divan. This will invariably be the case when a private and exclusive chess association holds its meetings contiguous to a public resort devoted to the same game. During the past year, the Paris *Cercle des Echecs*, which met in rooms over the Café de la Régence, found that the influence of the arena down stairs was too great for them, and they broke up their meetings, and are now to be found *en masse* in the public café.

In 1842 Mr. Ries invited Labourdonnais to come over from Paris, and play exclusively at the Divan, which offer that great master accepted. But his constitution was already shattered, and the malady which eventually carried him off interfered with his devoting much time to chess, and no matches of importance were played by him during the period. It was next door to the Divan, at No. 6 Beaufort Buildings, in rooms taken for him by Mr. Ries, that Labourdonnais finally succumbed to that terrible antagonist who, whatever the opening may be, brings the game of life to one inevitable ending – death!

Who, known to fame in chess during the past quarter of a century, has not assisted in making the Divan classic ground? Of bygone palladins we might instance Popard, Fraser, Zenn, Daniels, Alexander, Williams, Perigal, and a host of others, never for a moment forgetting Labourdonnais and Kieseritzky. The veterans Lewis and Walker made it a place of constant resort before they withdrew from the chess arena. In the Divan, Staunton rose from a Knight-player to a first rate. St. Arnaud, Anderssen, Harrwitz, Hörwitz, Kling, – in fact all the great living celebrities – make it their house of call when in London, whilst the brilliant *corps d'élite* composing the phalanx of English players – Löwenthal, Boden, Barnes, Bird, Lowe, Falkbeer, Wormald, Campbell, Zytogorsky, Brien, &c.,

&c., may frequently be found there, ready to meet all antagonists. When Mr. Buckle casts a "longing, lingering look behind" at his first love, he offers homage to Caïssa at the Divan. But we must stop, or we shall fain run through the whole list of living players.

In the room are busts of Lewis, Philidor, Labourdonnais, and other *vieux de la vielle*, and the library is replete with all the chief works on chess. From noon to midnight, players of every shade of strength are to be met with; – amateurs who learned the moves last week; professors who analyze openings, adepts inventing new defences, and editors who prove satisfactorily that the winner ought to have lost and the vanquished to have gained. [*Salām* to the Divan! May it live a thousand years!]

The Divan has certainly done much to spread a liking for the game amongst the masses; but, at the same time, it has somewhat interfered with the formation of a flourishing West End Chess Club. There is no city in the world in which so much chess is played as London, and the British metropolis should certainly show, at least, one club numbering from 500 to 1,000 members. Club life is an institution peculiar to Englishmen; divans, even when so well managed as Ries's, partake rather of the Gallic element, being of the *genus* café. Your aristocratic Briton frequents not the public saloon, preferring the *otium cum dignitate* of the private club. I am aware that chess in England is not fostered by the upper ranks of society: its amateurs are to be found mainly in the middle classes. Shopmen, clerks, professors of the arts, literary men, &c., form its rank and file. The majority of these, I speak of them as Englishmen, object to a place of public resort from various reasons. Smoking displeases some, and smoking is part and parcel of a divan. The Automaton itself could not get on without its *tchibouk*. All the advantages and none of the drawbacks of a public hall, are to be obtained at a club; especially when, as at the St. George's, one room is set apart for smoking. Surely the late impulse given to chess by Paul Morphy's European feats, will increase the members of these chess associations, which are incontestably the best schools for progress in the game.

About the year 1824, three or four young gentlemen who had recently learned chess, or rather the mechanical part of it, and had been playing a good deal together, made vain inquiries as to the existence of a Chess Club at the West End of London, being desirous of showing off their abilities to new advantage. The foremost of these ambitious juveniles was Mr. George Walker, the eminent Chess writer, and an author, too, whose never failing *bonhomie* is worthy of Lafontaine. Finding that "westward the star of empire" and of chess had not, as yet, begun to "take its way," they resolved to have a Club of their own. Philidor's Club could not be said to exist; the flame was flickering in some obscure corner, and the last member was preparing to leave. But the sacred fire was not to die out: – George Walker and his fellow youngsters built an altar for it at the Percy Coffee-House in Rathbone Place, Oxford Street, and blew the flame into a perfect blaze. Percy's Coffee-House was then a first-rate hotel: Belgravia, Brompton, Pimlico, were corn-fields and market-gardens, and the aristocracy had not emigrated from the neighborhood of Oxford Street. The denizens of that ilk might be supposed to find some leisure for the enjoyment of such a pastime as chess, and Walker and Co. soon enlisted upwards of a score of recruits. Night after night the members played what they in their innocence called chess, finishing the Monday evening with a supper, after which harmony and "the flowing bowl" prevailed. Things went on swimmingly in this Mutual Admiration Society, until one of the members, Mr. Perrier, of the War Office, upset the *status quo* by bringing into their midst Mr. Murphy, the celebrated ivory miniature painter, and father of Mrs. Jamieson, the authoress. Dire was the result; Mr. Murphy proved a very Trojan horse in this West End Ilium: for, as Mr. Walker says, "he entirely dispelled the illusion of the 'bold Percies' that they had been playing chess." He gave them one and all a Knight, essayed the Gambit on every occasion, and not one of the young gentlemen could make a stand against him.

As though not sufficiently humiliated, Mr. Murphy introduced Mr. Lewis to them, and the new comer completed their bewilderment by giving them the Rook and sweeping them clean off the board. But with such a master, the Percies, by dint of diligent study and practice, rapidly improved, and it was suggested to Mr. Lewis that he should open a private club at his own house. After a short delay

this was accomplished, and nearly all the members joined Mr. Lewis, when he opened subscription rooms in St. Martin's Lane – classic ground surely, for a former Chess Club had lived and died at Slaughter's Coffee-House, hard by.

Mr. Lewis collected quite a number of players around him, and was in fair way to find his enterprise profitable; but the most prominent members demurred to his not playing with them so much as they desired, more especially as Mr. Lewis did not appear to regard the institution as a Free School for the inculcation of Chess. The best of the young amateurs were Messrs. Walker, Brand, Mercier and McDonnell; the last, the best of the lot. McDonnell received from Mr. Lewis the odds of Pawn and Two Moves, but when he had fairly surmounted that advantage and could win every game, his antagonist declined playing on even terms, much to McDonnell's disappointment. This, however, appears to be the usual course with leading chess players, – Deschappelle's conduct in regard to Labourdonnais being a notable example of the fact. There are peculiar idiosyncrasies in chess human nature, as, for instance, the remarkable reserve and "*don't-come-nigh-me*" feeling with which leading amateurs treat each other. Go into any public or private chess association, and you will find that the superior craft steer clear of each other as a general thing; reserving their antagonism for matches few and far between.

The Club subsequently removed to the bottom of St. Martin's Lane, and shortly broke up, McDonnell and others returning to the London Club, whence they had migrated. A futile attempt was afterwards made to establish a grand aristocratic silk and satin club in Waterloo Place, the door of admission to which could only be opened with a golden key of ten guineas. Here lots of every thing could be found except chess, and no wonder, for the game does not find supporters, to any extent, among the rich, depending mainly upon individuals to whom ten guineas are a consideration. The club expired in twelve months. Caïssa thus lost her last foothold at the West End, and Mr. Lewis henceforth virtually abandoned the practice of chess.

The question has frequently been asked, whether and how Mr. Lewis played Labourdonnais? They played together on three different occasions, *in all seven games*, of which Labourdonnais won five and lost two. The first time they met was at the house of Mr. Domitt, Hon. Sec. of the London Club, and two Allgaier Gambits were played, each winning one. As they had just done their duty to a very good dinner, and society was then divided into two, three, and four bottle men, Labourdonnais remarked, "The victory is not likely to be gained by the better player, but by him who carries his wine best." This reminds me of a *bon mot* of Mr. Boden. Somebody remarked in his presence that two amateurs (whose names to mention "*decency forbids*") were both drunk, though engaged in a match game: he replied – "Then the best player will win."

After the conclusion of the two games, Messrs. Mercier, Bonfil and Domit, particular friends of the English player, challenged Labourdonnais to play Mr. Lewis a match of twenty-five games at £5 a game. This was rather too bad, considering that Labourdonnais, to use his own words, was "without a friend or a shilling in a foreign country;" but he laughed the challenge away as a joke in his own witty manner, by saying that "in such case he must be the best player who could offer to play for the highest stake," a reply which so pleased a gentleman present, Mr. Brand, that he cried out, "Labourdonnais shall play Lewis a match of 25 games at £10 a game, and I will find his stakes." It is stated that Mr. Brand evinced considerable ill-feeling towards Mr. Lewis, at the time, in consequence of the latter's preferring a move recommended by Mr. Mercier in the match then pending between the London and Edinburgh clubs, to one proposed by himself, and perhaps this was the reason for his offering to back the Frenchman against his own countryman. But Mr. Lewis's friends did not accept the challenge, and the two champions confined their contests to five off-hand games, which were played at the residences of Messrs. Bonfil and Mercier, Lewis winning one and Labourdonnais four, so that the final result was: —

Labourdonnais, 5 – Lewis, 2 – Drawn, 0

The above occurrences took place on the occasion of Labourdonnais' first visit to London, many years before his famous encounters with McDonnell.

About the year 1830, a gentleman of great parts and education, named Huttman, finding his share of this world's loaves and fishes not precisely what he could wish, opened a coffee house in Covent Garden. His patrons belonged to what society calls the "upper classes," for his prices were high and his refreshments first-rate; two considerable attractions to men of means. Amongst the frequenters of the rooms were Mr. Henry Russell, the since celebrated singer; Captain Medwin (Byron's medium), and Mr. Mackay, now Dr. Charles Mackay, the poet. Doctor Mackay was in New York during the chess tournament, and visited the rooms on that occasion, but we were then unaware of his early acquaintance with the game.

At Huttman's Coffee House, the habitués were gentlemen in quest of quietness; men of calm, reflective turn, given to chit-chat in nooks and corners; smoking a genuine "Havana" over a cup of unquestionable "Mocha," and reading that everlasting refuge for an Englishman, "*The Times*." Just the atmosphere for a chess-board, and two or three were accordingly introduced. Now you can never get chess-boards into any establishment, without the fact becoming immediately known amongst amateurs. Mr. George Walker soon got wind of the arrangement, and forthwith reconnoitred the lines. The result of his observations was that he suggested the formation of a chess club in the first floor rooms, and to this Mr. Huttman assented. Mr. Walker forthwith began drumming about for recruits; electing himself secretary, *pro tem.*, he drew up a set of rules, and got out printed circulars, and it was not his fault if any person with whom he claimed even bowing acquaintance, escaped from the meshes of the proposed club. Within a few days he had canvassed all his earliest chess friends, and had rallied round the standard of Caïssa between twenty and thirty defenders. It was resolved to style the association and Captain Medwin was elected the first president.

THE WESTMINSTER CLUB,

We are upon classic ground. Who does not remember the feats performed within the walls of this home of the glorious departed? Who shall forget the oft-told wonders of that golden age of chess? Any thing related of the Westminster Club is swallowed with willing faith by gaping acolytes. Those were glorious days, indeed, the Homeric age of zatrikiological worthies! Amongst the early supporters of the Club were the Rev. Mr. D'Arblay, (son of Madame D'Arblay,) Mr. Skelton, (so well known about town as "Dandy Skelton,") Mr. Nixon, organist of the Bavarian Catholic Church, in Warwick Street, Duncan Forbes, Professor of Oriental languages at University College, and many other celebrated literary characters. The proprietor, Mr. Huttman, followed the enterprise with spirit. Every cigar he sold in the coffee-room was wrapt in a printed problem; and, in addition, he published a periodical penny miscellany on chess. Such extraordinary exertions quickly bore fruit, and, in a short time the Club rose to something like fifty members. The room in which the meetings were held became, in consequence, so hot, that it was deservedly styled "the oven."

Emboldened by success, Mr. Huttman began to look about for new and more commodious quarters; these he eventually found on the opposite side of the street. Certain gamblers had there taken a house, and furnished the principal apartments in sumptuous style, for the sole purpose of decoying thither a young foreign nobleman, who, in one night, is said to have lost there upwards of £30,000. The house having served their diabolical ends, was of no further use to them, and Mr. Huttman rented it. Here the Westminster Club was enshrined. Amongst the chief supporters were Mr. George Walker, Hon. Sec.; Mr. B. Smith, M. P.; Albany Fonblanque, Esq., of *The Examiner*; Messrs. Perigal, Slous,

Popert, McDonnel, and many others from the London Club. In 1833, Labourdonnais and McDonnel played their different matches at these splendid rooms.

By the continued exertions of Mr. George Walker, the number of members was increased to three hundred. What a glorious muster-roll! Why should the "old days" not live again at the West End? Surely the ranks of chess players are not thinned, nor is their strength diminished. Our Löwenthals, Bodens, Birds, Stauntons, Barneses, Buckles, Wormalds, Falkbeers, Briens, Zytogorskys, Lowes, Hannahs, etc., etc., etc., are worthy descendants of West End men of the olden time, without even enlisting the support of such city magnates as the Mongredieus, Slouses, Medleys, etc., of the ancient and virile London Club. Many members of the Westminster still make love to the nymph Caïssa; such historical names as Slous and Walker for instance. But, in addition to the above-mentioned general officers, we now possess a constantly-increasing rank and file, recruited from the chess-playing militia of schools and private families. Chess is assuming vast proportions in England and America: scarcely a weekly paper of any circulation but gives a column to the game; and certainly no newspaper editor would do so if he did not find it pay. At the West End of London, there now exist two clubs of importance, the old St. George's and the new St. James's; the Philidorean Rooms in Rathbone Place partaking rather of the divan character. Neither of these clubs require proficiency in the game as a passport for membership; and a gentleman receiving the Queen would be just as eligible as the amateur giving it. Surely the advantages offered for increasing one's strength in this intellectual struggle of mind against mind, should be an inducement for young players to enroll themselves in one or the other of these two associations.

When the Westminster had grown up into a goodly body of three hundred members, Mr. George Walker began to find that the duties of secretary were interfering seriously with his other pursuits, and he therefore resigned the office, and was succeeded by Mr. William Greenwood Walker, to whom the chess world is so much indebted for taking down the games of McDonnel. The Club had arrived at its Augustine era, and, in 1838, its fortunes began to wane; the proprietor getting into pecuniary difficulties. Mr. Huttman could not let well alone. He introduced a daily dinner, on plans so profoundly calculated, that the more persons who dined the more he lost. He got the Club, also, into bad odor, by allowing chess to be played there on Sundays. Musical soirées and other nonsense followed; the main object of the establishment thus became ignored, and, instead of new members joining, the old ones fell off one by one, and the princely mansion in Bedford street was shortly to let. Mr. Huttman's pecuniary difficulties perilled the very existence of the Club, notwithstanding that the members handed over to him the reserve fund, amounting to a few hundred pounds. No Club can be said to be in safety without such a fund upon which to fall back in case of emergency, as for instance, retirement of members. Members of chess clubs will retire – prominent ones even – a very frequent cause being marriage; the backsliders, however, often come back eventually.

The Westminster Club being now without house or home, looked about for some benevolent individual who would "take them in and do for them." Such an one they found in Mr. Ries, proprietor of the Divan in the Strand, who offered them private rooms in his establishment; thither the *débris* of the old Westminster forthwith removed. Each member was provided with a latch-key, with which to let himself in at the private door. Here it was that Mr. Staunton appeared for the first time in chess-circles, although he was never a member of the Westminster Club. In its new quarters the association drew out an existence of twelve months, giving up the ghost in 1840.

About this time, the veteran writer and encyclopædist, Alexandre, made a lamentable *fiasco* at his Café de l'Echiquier in Paris; an establishment which he vainly hoped would entice away the *habitués* of the Cafés de la Régence et de Procopé. Coming over to London, he made the acquaintance of Mr. Staunton, and the two players struck hands together, and resolved to open a chess establishment as a partnership concern. Alexandre put in his little all – the change out of his Paris capital – and he and his coadjutor opened rooms at the Waterloo Chambers. A very good locality, perhaps too good, for rents in that neighborhood are rather high. Some twenty or thirty old players rallied round them,

but the attempt was only of short duration. The two *camarades* took to squabbling and vilifying each other; and, within a year, the Club was formally dissolved at the request of the members.

All connection now being severed between the members and Messrs. Alexandre and Staunton, the amateurs convened a private meeting for the purpose of examining their prospects and taking steps for reorganization. Mr. George Walker advertised for a large room, and was answered by Mr. Beattie, proprietor of Beattie's Hotel, George street, Hanover square. Here, once again, the remains of the "old guard" planted their standard, and in special, solemn convocation, under a full sense of their responsibility, and with all due solemnity, they christened their Club the name being suggested, in the first place, by the baptismal appellation of their virtual founder and Hon. Sec., Mr. George Walker; and, secondly, because the meeting was in George street, in the parish of St. George's. The Club was exceedingly prosperous during the first year of its existence, much being due to the fostering care of Mr. B. Smith, M. P. for Norwich, who was assiduous in his attendance, and a capital "whipper-in" of members. The room was large, well proportioned, and well ventilated, cooking first-rate, wines unexceptionable. Wine, by the by, makes your game brilliant, if not sound. Dull, unimaginative Zsen would have been betrayed into an attempt at brilliance and dash, with a couple of bottles of "old crusted" under his belt. But it began to appear as though a West End Club could be nought but an "annual." Mr. Beattie failed in business, and the St. George's were turned out of doors, wanderers for a season, without prospect of refuge. And the devotees of Caïssa were on the town for some weeks, two or three of the leading and most active assiduously on the watch to find a fresh location, but almost in blank despair as to the result.

THE ST. GEORGE'S,

Mr. B. Smith was a large shareholder in the Polytechnic Institution, Regent street. The managing committee of that estimable establishment were, about this time, endeavoring to form reading-rooms by subscription, in the first floor of their building, facing Cavendish square. It was suggested to the committee that chess and reading might be combined; that one large room facing the square should be set apart for reading exclusively, and two smaller ones be devoted to chess. A meeting was forthwith convened, Mr. Nurse representing the proprietors of the Institution, the chess players present being Mr. B. Smith, Mr. Richard Penn, and the indefatigable and indomitable George Walker. These three gentlemen guaranteed that one hundred members, paying an annual subscription of three guineas each, should be enrolled in the Chess Club within twelve months; and, once again, the red cross of the St. George's was floating bravely in the air. Forthwith commenced the hunting up of old members of the Westminster and other West End Clubs: touching and tender circulars were issued by Mr. Walker, adjuring the straggling devotees of Caïssa, by all the recollections of their first and early loves, by all their hopes of a glorious hereafter, to rush once more to the rescue. Could such pathetic appeals fall unheeded upon the chess-lover's ear? No. A hundred and fifty members reiterated "no" to the accompaniment of their one hundred and fifty three-guinea subscriptions. "Royal Blue-Book" notabilities enrolled themselves; as, for instance, the present Lord Ravensworth, Dr. Murray, Lord Bishop of Rochester, the Honorable Charles Murray, Mr. Brooke Greville, Mr. Albany Fonblanque, the Messrs. Hampton, Lord Clarence Paget, and a host of other fashionables. So the St. George's flourished for years, and it began to appear that a Chess Club at the West End could, under proper management, become a permanent institution.

It was in this *locale* that Mr. Staunton played his first match with Saint Amant, and, losing it, took his revenge by winning in his turn at Paris. For some reason or other, the French amateur displayed unaccountable nervousness during the progress of the match in his own capital. The Baronne de L – , who is well known in Parisian *salons* as an excellent player and firm supporter of the game, assured me but lately that she had no easy task in instilling courage into her countryman, startled as he was by Mr. Staunton's winning game after game from him. Warming up under the merry

rebukes of his fair inspirer, Saint Amant began to turn the tables upon his antagonist, and it seemed as if he would anticipate the result of the contest between Löwenthal and Harrwitz. Mr. Staunton, however, eventually won, and the stakes were deposited for the third and deciding match, but Mr. S. was taken ill, and it was never played. It is unfortunate for Mr. Staunton's reputation that the plea of bad health was so frequently used by him when opponents appeared, more especially as he is the first to ridicule such an excuse when coming from others. And it is more than ever unfortunate in this instance, because the French players declared that, judging from the later games of the match in Paris, it was obvious that Mr. Staunton would have succumbed to their champion if the third and deciding heat had not been prevented by the Englishman's indisposition. And many of them even affirm that Mr. S. felt this and acted in consequence.

It may be added that the St. George's Chess Club had been installed at the Polytechnic Institution some years before Mr. Staunton joined them, as an honorary member, in compliment to his rising reputation. Mr. Staunton was laid under lasting obligations to Mr. George Walker, by the latter's bringing him from obscurity into public notice, not merely by introducing him to the London chess world, but, in addition, by flattering notices of him in his works. He may, in fact, be considered the pupil of Mr. Walker, and the courtesy with which he has always treated his benefactor makes one think of Labourdonnais's delicacy towards his old master Deschappelles.

It would seem as though chess-players, like other men, "get weary in well-doing," and constantly stand in need of fresh stimulus. Nothing could have been more suitable or comfortable than the accommodations of the St. George's at the Polytechnic, and yet they got to yearning after they scarcely knew what. The cry was raised that members ought to be able to dine at their Club, and they forthwith migrated *en masse* to apartments in Crockford's Club, transmogrified into an eating-house on a splendid scale, and styled "The Wellington." Here they dwindled away, and the St. George's would have finally disappeared from existence had it not been for the kindness of Mr. Thomas Hampton, who offered them apartments at New Palace Club Chambers, in King street, St. James's. Under his fostering care, and the patriotic manner in which he is continually arranging matches and organizing tournaments amongst the members, the St. George's has largely increased its muster-roll of amateurs, and bids fair to enjoy more halcyon days than ever. In these rooms Paul Morphy played part of his match with Herr Löwenthal, and vanquished the well-known amateur "Alter," in a contest at Pawn and Move. And in dismissing this now prosperous West End Club, I must not forget to mention, for the benefit of those of my readers who are ignorant of the fact, that it was the St. George's which initiated and successfully carried out the Grand International Tournament of 1851, in which the Teutonic element made itself so conspicuous.

Experience seems to teach us that no West End Club can be permanently prosperous, without a recognized professor of the game being constantly, or frequently, in attendance; one whose object is the interest, not of himself, but of chess, willing and ready to play with all comers for the benefit of all. In such a Club as the London, where the members are business men, there is no hollow principle of *caste*; social democracy exists, and the players play, talk, laugh, and eat together on a perfect equality, be they simple clerks or merchant princes. At the Court End of the town manners are reserved; and such a thing may happen as two members of the same Club waiting several years, before an introduction justifies them in speaking to each other. A professor would bring all these stupid *convenances de la société* to a speedy end, and, by his recognized position in the Club, arrange contests between members of equal force, and thus further the objects for which they are associated.

THE LONDON CHESS CLUB

In the very heart of the City of London, under the shadows of the Bank and Royal Exchange, and but a step from Lombard street, the London Chess Club holds its daily sittings. Who would expect to find such an association in such a place? Is the quiet of the chess arena consonant with the hum of

busy multitudes, hurrying to and fro in never-failing ardor after the yellow god? Are stocks and scrip and dividends allied to gambits and mates? Shall Lloyd's Chapel Court and the Corn Exchange furnish supporters of Caïssa? Come along with me to Cornhill. Stop! This is Pursell's restaurant. We'll walk up stairs. This room on the first floor is devoted to billiards. Above it meets the Cosmopolitan Club, and on the third floor – out of reach of the noise below – is the famous old "London," of which every player of note during the past fifty years has either been a member or visitor.

It is between three and four o'clock in the afternoon, and the rooms of the Club present the usual appearance at that hour. In the right-hand corner we perceive the President, Mr. Mongredieu, engaged in dire conflict with Mr. Maude, to whom he has offered the advantage of Pawn and Move. Readers of the *Chess Players' Chronicle*, of the *Palamède*, and *La Régence*, have known Mr. Mongredieu for long years past, as an amateur of first-rate force, who gets himself invariably into difficulties at the commencement of a game, by his unvanquishable contempt for book openings, but who comes out all right at last, by his masterly tactics in the middle of the contest. Possessed of a fund of native English humor, and a finished scholar withal, he keeps up a running fire of wit and anecdote throughout the game, in which the lookers-on join. By his side is Mr. George Medley, the Secretary of the Club, whose name is also a "household word" to amateurs; he and Mr. Mongredieu ranking as the strongest players of the association. The latter gentleman has run in for an hour's play from the Corn Exchange, being in fact one of those men who, before the knowledge of Political Economy had become diffused amongst the masses, were styled "the rogues in grain." Mr. Medley has just arrived from the Stock Exchange, where, after "Bearing" or "Bulling" Mr. Slous, George Walker, and Mr. Waite during the morning, he meets them at the Chess Club towards three o'clock, and they become as much absorbed in the mysteries of the game as though it were the business of their lives.

If you wish to see what influence chess can have upon individuals, just analyze the London Club. The members are not "men of straw," but sound, substantial citizens, with balances at their bankers heavy enough to buy up half-a-dozen lords. Does a Rothschild or a Baring negotiate a loan? Here you will find men to take up the greater part, if not the whole of it. Is capital for a railroad wanted? You need not wander much further. Look around you, and you will recognize many of the foremost of Great Britain's merchant princes; men pushing England's commerce into every bay and inlet of old ocean, carrying the British flag across seas and lakes, and penetrating continents; causing British cannon to thunder at the gates of Peking, and opening Japan to the commerce of the world. These are the children of the men who first planted foot in Hindostan, descendants of those who established England's colonies. These are the men, the very men, who repealed the Corn Laws in 1846, established the principle of Free Trade, and told a proud, titled aristocracy – "We, the middle class, the merchants, bankers, and manufacturers of Great Britain, are the source of all power in England, as we are the source of her greatness."

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