

THE HISTORY OF CHESS

H. E. BIRD

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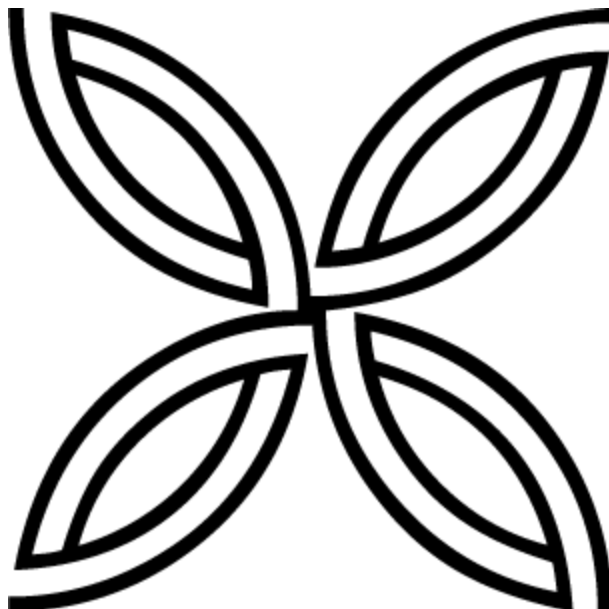
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PREFACE

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 Pursell's, Cornhill respectively.

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

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.

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, Deschapelles 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 Havanna 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 recreationary 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.

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, 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 Barbieri, 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 Carlovingian

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 encyclopaedists 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, &c., 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 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.