

**WESTMINSTER PAPERS: A
MONTHLY JOURNAL OF CHESS,
WHIST, GAMES OF SKILL,
AND THE DRAMA. VOLUME IV**

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Westminster Papers: A Monthly Journal of Chess, Whist, Games of Skill, and the Drama.
Volume IV by Westminster Chess Club

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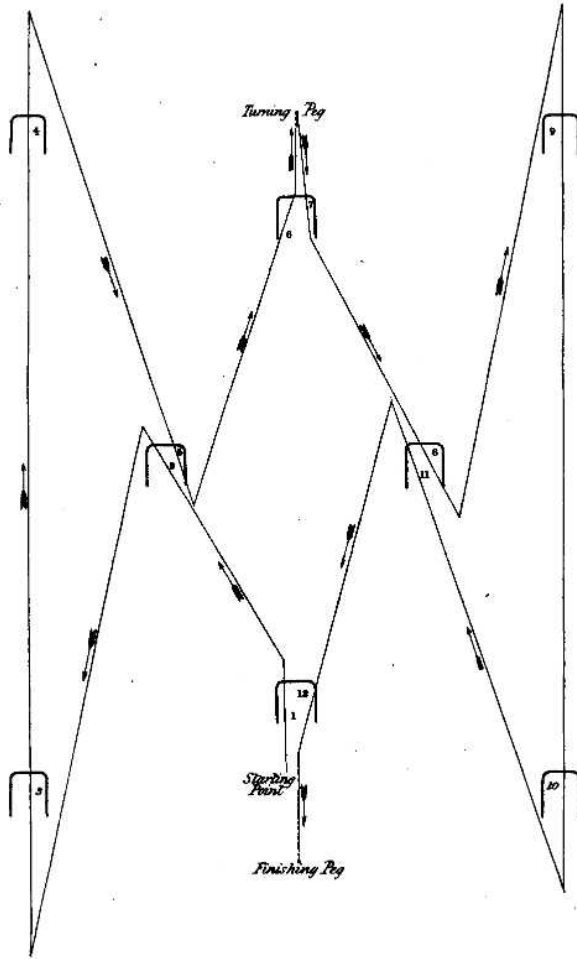
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WESTMINSTER CHESS CLUB

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Setting of the Grand National Croquet Club.

Adopted by the Secretaries in 1878, instead of Setting No. 1 published in the Regulations for 1871.



THE
Westminster Papers.

A MONTHLY JOURNAL

OF

CHESS, WHIST, GAMES OF SKILL,

AND

THE DRAMA.

VOLUME IV.

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The Westminster Papers.

1st MAY 1871.

OURSELVES.

WE trust our readers will forgive us if, in commencing the Fourth Volume of the *Westminster Papers*, we devote a portion of our space to a brief review of our past labours.

It may be urged that "on their own merits modest men are dumb"—and we are willing to concede that the severest self judgment will generally be found tempered with mercy—but laudation of ourselves is not our present purpose, except indeed so far as a recapitulation of our aims and objects may conduce to that end.

First, as regards our Chess Department. We have, by giving our readers only the best games and problems, never before published, definitely established a reliable standard of Chess skill during the past three years; inasmuch as these have been contributed by the most eminent Chess players of Europe. Among foreign players whose games or problems will be found in our pages there are,—Anderssen, Horwitz, Hoffer, Kling, Kolisch, Minckwitz, Meyer, Neumann, Paulsen, Rosenthal and Steinitz; whilst of native skill there are examples from Blackburne, Boden, Burden, Burn, Bird, De Vere, Duffy, Frazer, Grimshaw, Kidson, Macdonnell, Ormond, Potter, Skipworth, Smith, Thorold, Wayte, Wisker and Wormald. To all these gentlemen our thanks are justly due. We are indebted to them for the straw without which our bricks would have never reached a market, and we now offer them those acknowledgments which the steadiness of their attachment calls upon us to testify. We shall, in the future as we have in the past, endeavour to revive in this country that interest in the Royal Game which the professional charlatanism of the period had so nearly succeeded in destroying, and if our honest criticism should condemn a few pretenders to deserved oblivion we have the satisfaction of knowing that it can but increase the reputation of the true masters of Chess. We are proud to say that such has been the reputation which these "Papers" have obtained, both at home and abroad, that we have been obliged to reprint most of the numbers up to the present time, notwithstanding that unusually copious editions of each were issued on the first publication.

As to Whist, we have given 88 hands. In the whole Whist literature we doubt if so large a number has hitherto been published. *The Field* has contributed 60, and Cavendish 12, but we think we are accurate in stating that there are not elsewhere a dozen published games. Except in very rare instances, *The Field* is not "bound," and the games are practically lost after the week of publication. Our 88 hands form a valuable part of Whist literature. We do not pretend that they are perfect, but, with the exception of some half-dozen, they are all genuine, being given exactly as they were played. To a student of Whist these must prove of immense value, and future generations of players—when Whist has grown as it will grow, and has improved as it will improve—may possibly look at these hands to see how we played in 1870. A few hands noted down by Hoyle or Mathews would now be of great value. Some of the hands we have given are of great beauty; others, again, point out gross but common errors; whilst the majority are instances of the stupidity of one player and the skill of another in taking advantage of the blunder. This, after all, is Whist. If we could find perfect hands we should publish them; but to find four good players at one table, and one of these players not only capable to take down the game, but sufficiently interested in the subject to do so, are events unlikely to happen often. For the games we have published, we have especially to thank Mr. Belieff (whose memory in this respect is very remarkable), Emgeen, Cam, Mogul, F. H. Lewis, Senex and H. M. P. for their contributions, and the remainder have been taken down by ourselves immediately after they were played. For the convenience of reference we purpose hereafter to number the games consecutively, beginning at 90. We have also published in our three volumes, 49 examples of Simple Endings, Whist Curiosities, Double Dummy Hands and Double Dummy Endings; a collection which, we believe, as regards number and quality, has never before been equalled; and for the large majority of these we are indebted to Mr. F. H. Lewis. We shall number the next Ending 50 for convenience of reference. Of our law we have reason to be vain. The numbers of questions referred to us for decision have yearly increased. Our answers have met with general

approval, and, as we give our reasons for our decisions, we may rest assured that in a community of Whist players they would not have remained unchallenged unless they were based on sound reasoning. Although, prior to our existence, there was already a good authority on the laws in the person of Cavendish, he wrote his answers without giving the questions propounded to him, and he preferred the *ipse dixit* of himself or another to reasons. We fancy we have assisted in clearing up many of the obscurities in the laws, and we are sure that Whist lawyers will hereafter find the points raised and decided in these columns of great value. Whether he adopt the answers or not, he will see what the question was, and the grounds for the decision. On Piquet we have had many questions, and we have to thank the ever kind and courteous J. C. for his valuable aid in this department. The laws of Piquet are in a very unsatisfactory state, and if Cavendish had marked the growing interest on the subject we fancy he would not have wasted his time in bringing out laws of Poker, Écarté and Spoil Five (which we did not want), but would have given us a revised edition of the laws of Piquet, which we do want.

Of the books that have been brought out on the subject of Chess and Whist, we think we have spoken without fear or favour. We have not bowed down nor worshipped any great authorities; nor because the writers were unknown have we condemned their productions. The same independence that we have shewn in the past will we trust be exhibited in our pages in the future. We may add, that it has been our desire to improve and elevate the game of Whist as much as possible, and to sweep away everything derogatory to it. Everything in the nature of sharp practice and petty fraud that has come to our ears, and everything that is unbecoming a gentleman at the Whist table, has received at our hands censure in its purest and least adulterated form. Whist is not a game for sharpers, nor need gentlemen mix with sharpers. Wrangles and quarrelling are not necessities of Whist, and are just as great an offence against good taste as brawling in church. Breaches of etiquette have received castigation at our hands, and, although we have offended many of our correspondents by our outspokenness on these subjects, we believe that on the whole we have done good.

The Notes on the Drama and the Theatres, which have been so great a feature of the Magazine, will be continued as occasion may require. It has been objected that Dramatic Notes are out of place in a serial of this description, and are not consonant with the rest of the matter contained in its pages; and that the devotees of Whist, Chess, and other games of skill are the last people in the world to trouble their heads about theatrical affairs. Our answer to this, if any answer be necessary, is that, whether out of place or otherwise, these Notes are found very acceptable to our subscribers, who receive them with pleasure, and complain if they are absent. In fact, they have met with very considerable favour, and the reason we conceive to be, not merely that they are written with ability and a knowledge of the subject, but that they are marked by a thorough independence of treatment. When, two years ago, we commenced a series of Dramatic Notes, independent criticism on things theatrical was quite unknown. The professional critic was merely a reporter, and the many abuses connected with actors, authors, managers and the critics themselves were allowed to reign unheeded. It is with some satisfaction, therefore, that we can point to a considerable change for the better in these matters. The consideration of very many abuses, which have been commented upon by our contributor in town, has been taken up in more influential quarters; and at present it would seem that an era of wholesale cursing is to succeed that of unmixed blessing. A change is evident in dramatic criticism, which, if not more able, is at least more honest than two years ago; but that there is yet room for much improvement may be seen from a remarkable article on Mr. Oxenford, which lately appeared in the *Athenæum*. A change is evidently arising in the system of free admissions, a system that we have always warred against, and has recently been denounced by the management of the newest theatre in London. Lastly, a change is very evident in one or two old theatres, the decrepit and effete nature of whose performers and entertainments has been the theme of much censure in these pages; and the Adelphi Theatre, which may be taken as a specimen, is now rejuvenescent, and frisks as gaily as the youngest of its rivals. But there is still plenty of work to be done; and, as it has already been, the note of many a reform may yet be sounded in the pages of the *Westminster Papers*: although the humble pipe which sounds it may be unnoticed in the grand crash of instruments of wind and brass that take up the burden of the tune.

Each year we have given more matter for the money; our circulation increases steadily: but great help could be afforded if the Secretaries to the various Chess and Whist Clubs in the country would not only use their endeavours to promote the circulation, but would also contribute items of information in connection with the two games.

To the Press generally we have reason to be grateful. From *Bell's Life*, the *Chess Quarterly*, *Land and Water*, the *Gentleman's Journal*, and all our foreign contemporaries, we have received cordial assistance. The *Illustrated* and *Era* retain their policy of isolation, and refuse to recognize our existence. It is encouraging to be assured that this policy not merely fails in its desired object, but has the additional effect of recoiling upon its authors, for the journals in question have ceased to have authority in Chess matters, the Chess column in both being inferior in interest and importance to that in *Land and Water*. Whether the new Chess editor of *The Field* will restore its lost prestige remains to be seen, but at present he has not exhibited that daring and originality we have a right to expect at the hands of so young a writer and such an ingenious player.

FOSSIL CHESS.

It has not yet occurred to us that the relation of events in chronological order is any assistance to the memory in retaining them in that order or in any other. The history of England, in which at school we were supposed greatly to excel, left no continuous story on our minds, but only a confused mass of murders and dates; all order too in the succession of the sovereigns' reigns was lost, but, from the maxim "ladies first" having been early instilled into us, we were for some time naturally under the impression that the queens were the first sovereigns, beginning with "Good Queen Bess," (whom we have, however, since discovered to be no better than she should be) and finishing off with Boadicea; such is the result of chronological order. We do not wish this series of articles to resemble a kitchen-garden, in which the vegetables succeed each other, season by season, from the green kale in January, to the radish in December, but rather to be like Covent Garden Market, in which all the vegetables of many seasons are displayed at once, with fruits and perhaps some flowers; and where each can obtain what he likes best, subject only to one condition, with which our readers are probably already acquainted. We shall not, therefore, consider ourselves bound to tell our story chronologically; but shall put all our facts into a box, and draw them out one by one, and relate them for the instruction and—for the amusement of our respected readers.

History is not always beautiful,—it is the record of what men do; tradition sometimes is,—it is the story of men's dreams. The Sagas, amplifications like the Edda, of the Voluspa, the Bible of the ancient Scandinavians, contain many beautiful traditions; amongst others, they represent the dead heroes enjoying themselves in the Walhalla, playing at Chess, and drinking, from the skulls of their slain enemies, mead, served by the Valkyria; celestial virgins of the "beautiful for ever" type. This is certainly a pleasant way of passing one's days, but we have occasion to fear, from the fact of time being unlimited, that the games were rather of longer duration than would be pleasant to any of us mortals since the date of old Parr. All this, however is changed now; the mead is made of bad and cheap wine, and is limited in quantity. The Valkyria, too, we regret to learn, are fading away, the only individual possessing the secret of rendering them "beautiful for ever" having been locked up in jail. This is a delightful picture; history is not always so nice, viz. :—

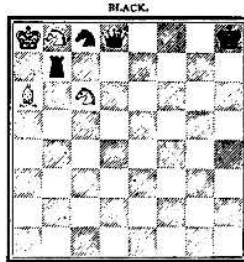
An Emperor of Morocco, whose name, like some authors, we shall not pretend to forget, because we never knew it, was inordinately fond of Chess. His board was the floor of his hall, and his pieces human beings; all the pieces that were taken during the game he caused to be beheaded. Conceive the agony of the Gambit-pawn. This is history, and we think forms an exception to the generally received rule that Chess is a harmless game; for the benefit of our younger players, however, we beg to say that this method of play is now quite out of fashion.

We should have placed the problem which is in the margin at the end of the article, as it looks better, had it not been our lot to draw it next out of the box. It is intended to represent the battle of the Horatii and the Curiatii, with all the eventualities of that memorable mill—the sacrifice of two, and the final victory of one against three. The white are the Albans. We are sorry we cannot inform our readers which are the Horatii and which the Curiatii, for, although until recently, writers were contented to accept the old story that the Horatii fought on the Roman side, now, in this sceptic age, all old stories are being pulled to pieces, and the fact of the Horatian *gens* in Rome having some generation or two back assumed the name of "Luceres" is, according to some historians, good ground for a little doubt; we think so too, the more especially as there were Horatii among the Albans. But this has nothing to do with the subject.

Guido Novello da Polenta, master of Ravenna with little intermission from 1265 to 1322, the munificent patron of Dante and himself, according to Tiraboschi, a poet of some excellence, was certainly the first who gave any substantial encouragement to Chess and Chess players out of Spain, where it had long been cultivated by the Moors. At his invitation Buzacca, a Moor, and the best player of the time visited Ravenna, in 1266, and played three simultaneous games, two of them blindfolded, with the three best procurable antagonists; two of them he won, and the third, that played over the board, was a draw. We verily believe that Guido Novello da Polenta was astonished.

The poems of the Tafelrunde, the German version of the old Welsh Knights of the Round Table, contain allusions to Chess, and represent the Knights as occasionally playing; this is, however, only a flight of the poet's fancy, as few will be willing to believe that the huge round table at Winchester Castle was designed by Uter Pendragon as a Chess-board.

Few things connected with Chess are more interesting to some than the origin of the names of the pieces, and the mutations which the pieces themselves have undergone from the beginning. The game, of Indian origin, travelled to us through Persia, where we first hear of its being played by Chosroes, in 580. In Persia the King is *Schah*, *Siah* or *Schach*; this last is the German for *Chess* and *Check*, and with it are more or less



Black to move and mate in three moves.

nearly allied all European names for the game except the Russian, which is direct from India. *En passant*, *Schach* in Persian signifies also a small coin, so-called, no doubt, on account of its value—a trifle under three half-pence. In old German, *Schach* means robbery, plunder, violence and murder, in fact the whole stock-in-trade of an old German king. The identity almost of the meanings of the word in the two languages is remarkable, as the word itself, and that which it represents in both nations are of distinct origin. The King has undergone no change except in the mode of his Casting; with the Italians the square upon which he is to be placed is at the option of the player, and the same with the Rook. Among some people, the King, instead of Casting, is allowed once the move of the Knight, but cannot capture in making the move. The Castle or Rook was the piece of most importance in the old game, on account of its power, that being as now. The word *Kohk*, both in Persian and Indian, signifies a camel, answering in battle to our light horse, and placed on the wings of the armies. Amongst the Eastern people this piece is sometimes carved in the similitude of that beast. How the camel came to be metamorphosed into a Castle, has not been satisfactorily explained.

We shall give an account of this and other matters in our next, but at present our space is full.

[To be continued.]

WESTMINSTER CHESS CLUB PROBLEM TOURNAMENT.

THE custom which has prevailed for some years past of offering prizes for original problems has raised up amongst us a class of Chess Amateurs almost totally distinct from ordinary Chess players.

Chess now attracts, like the sciences, two types of intellect. It has in the ordinary Chess player its skilled artisan, and in the problem composer its inventive designer; and this analogy with other arts so far holds good, that the two qualities are rarely to be found in the same person. That the inventive designer is a necessity, the universal demand for his productions sufficiently proves, and when we consider the large and increasing number of amateurs who, either as composers or solvers of problems, take an interest in that branch of the game, it is obviously desirable to supply an occasional stimulus to their exertions by a competition for prizes. We have therefore great pleasure in announcing that the Committee of the Westminster Chess Club, on the proposal of Dr. Alexander, warmly supported by Mr. Boden, Mr. Maret, and the other members of that body, offer two prizes for the best sets of three original problems by British composers. This limitation of the competition, which we heartily approve, has not been adopted hastily, nor without due consideration. It does not emanate from any illiberal or other unworthy feeling towards the stranger, nor from any sense of the inferiority of native composers, but from a conscientious opinion that the first duty of an English Chess Club is to encourage and foster British Chess. It will, we conceive, be time enough to invite the world to compete with us when a reliable standard of our own skill has been ascertained, and, until that desirable result has been accomplished, our energies need not be devoted to measuring the skill of others.

The Committee have appointed Mr. R. B. Wormald and Mr. P. T. Duffy examiners and judges, and have committed to these gentlemen the power to define the conditions, and make all the necessary arrangements for the tourney, and their names will be a sufficient guarantee to the Chess world of an able examination of the competing problems, and an impartial award of the prizes. By reference to the conditions of the tourney it will be seen, that a plan has been adopted whereby each competitor will have an opportunity of examining the competing problems before the award is made, and we are authorised to state that the judges will be glad to receive remarks or suggestions in reference to the originality and accuracy of the problems, addressed to the Editor of this Journal. The following are the conditions of the Tourney:—

1. The competition will be open to British composers only.
2. The problems to be original, to be ordinary mates, and the solutions to be in not less than three nor more than four moves.
3. Each competitor to send three problems. The positions to be clearly described upon diagrams, to be accompanied by full solutions, and to bear a distinguishing device or motto, and not the author's name.
4. Each competitor to send with the problems a sealed envelope containing his name and address, and endorsed with the motto corresponding with that affixed to the problems. These envelopes will not be opened until after the adjudication of the prizes.
5. The problems to be sent to the Editor of the *Westminster Papers*, 1 Ironmonger Lane, London, E.C., on or before the 14th day of July 1871 from composers resident in the United Kingdom, and on or before the 14th day of August 1871 from composers resident in the colonies or abroad.
6. Problems the joint composition of two or more composers will be disqualified.
7. The problems, after undergoing a preliminary examination, will be published in this Journal, at the rate of three sets per month; and on the expiration of one month after the publication of the last set, the prizes will be awarded.

PRIZES.

FIRST PRIZE.—For the best set of three original problems in not less than three nor more than four moves £5.
 SECOND PRIZE £2 10s.