

**CHESS STUDIES: COMPRISING
ONE THOUSAND GAMES,
ACTUALLY PLAYED DURING
THE LAST HALF CENTURY**

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Chess Studies: Comprising One Thousand Games, Actually Played During the Last Half Century
by George Walker

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GEORGE WALKER

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COMPRISING

ONE THOUSAND GAMES,

ACTUALLY PLAYED DURING THE LAST HALF CENTURY ;

PRESENTING A UNIQUE COLLECTION

OF

CLASSICAL AND BRILLIANT

SPECIMENS OF CHESS SKILL,

IN EVERY STAGE OF THE GAME :

AND THUS FORMING

A Complete Encyclopedia of Reference.

BY GEORGE WALKER.

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1844.



INTRODUCTION.

THE title of this volume so fully explains the nature of its contents, that preface of any kind seems hardly needed. It appears to me, however, advisable to offer certain introductory details, relative to the objects I have chiefly kept in view, in forming this unique collection of games actually played by the leading chess practitioners of modern times. Admitting it correct to define a general Treatise on the theory of the game, as "Chess as it should be,"—we may fairly style these "Studies"—"Chess as it is, and as it has been:"—may I not reasonably indulge in the belief that they will in some degree strengthen "Chess as it will be?"

The advantage of reviewing games actually played being conceded as matter of instruction—not to say merely amusement—the present generation have assuredly far greater opportunities of acquiring Chess knowledge, than the past; and, looking round, we everywhere behold the cheering result. If we can boast of no one phenomenon like Philidor, we have a hundred Second-rates, where Philidor and his times could barely produce half a dozen. The fact that Chess is better played every year cannot be doubted. It grows with its practice. To how few amateurs can a first-rate player give the odds of the piece in the present day, compared only with what he could have rendered ten years back? Will it not be allowed that much of this progress is owing to the many excellent Chess books, which public demand has latterly called into life? And with this assurance it is that I venture to add the present to my many other hearty, however humble, labours in the cause.

It is the custom with many authors to affect a diffidence they little feel; while others, again, herald forth their latest-born child as a miracle of talent—a grand desideratum—second only to the philosopher's stone, or the elixir of life. I am proud to assert that this book will be a book of value; and I can say this with the greater propriety, so little of it, strictly speaking, being mine. At the same time I confess that the world *could* have gone on without it.

Many persons object to studying Chess from a regular treatise on the theory of the science, because, say they, the positions assumed to arise from the different openings in their endless varieties, cannot be compelled to appear in real play. Entertaining such opinions, whether right or wrong, it follows that amateurs cannot be expected to seek either recreation or advancement in spending long, long hours, over what they take up with the preconceived idea that their lesson is but the author's fancy. To such students, the following pages present themselves as being purely practical,

and quite independent of individual Chess-creed, authorship, or opinion. Nearly every opening, sound or unsound, old or new, heavy or brilliant, will here be found ; illustrated by the practice of the first artists. We have before us a gallery of 1000 Chess pictures, actually painted by the chief masters of the art ; and thus, while the tyro makes his election as to whose style he prefers to follow, the adept is enabled to compare advantageously the beauties and blemishes of all.

In thus analyzing the creations of different great players, as so many various schools of art, we are not only enabled at once to weigh accurately their relative merits, without being dazzled by mere name, but also to place in juxtaposition the play of the several epochs of time ; and it becomes matter of fair exultation, when we can thus honestly adopt the conclusion that the present age may so worthily mate with the past. Should the by-gone century taunt us with Philidor, Bernard, or Legalle, we reply with De la Bourdonnais, Des Chapelles, and M'Donnell :—bearded by Boncourt, and Sarratt ; by Lolli, Del Rio, and Ponziani,—we proudly oppose to them the names of Cochrane, of St. Amant, of Staunton, of Der Lasa, of Szen, and Kieseritzkij. Moreover, with a Chess Museum before us like the present, we can equally adjust the claims to renown presented by the great living players of all the countries of Europe, opposed on the Chess-field in arms to each other. Petroff and Janisch in the frozen north—St. Amant, Calvi, La Roche, and Kieseritzkij in their sunny France—Heydebrand Der Lasa, Szen, Lowenthal, and Bledow of Germany—Perigal, Staunton, and Daniels in London town—all pass severally in array before us, like soldiers on parade, or beauties at a court drawing-room. To all we can thus deal out their deserved measure of praise, and impartially try the various Chess qualities of each by the same standard, without either fear or flattery ; our motto being that of Nelson, “ *Palmam qui meruit ferat!* ”

It must ever be considered as matter of regret that the practice of noting down Chess games actually played is a habit only of modern growth ; and was not adopted in the early and middle ages. Where are the parties played between Leonardo, Paolo Boi, Salvio, Greco, Carrera, Rui Lopez, Gianutio, and the rest of that illustrious fraternity ? Where may we look for existing specimens of the undoubted skill of their immediate successors, as Scipione del Grotto, Il Casertano, and other Chess worthies whose names are recorded by Rocco.* And from them advancing to the times of our own grandsires, where are the battles fought by the Modonese, Ercole del Rio, with Taruffi, Lolli, and Ponziani ? Alas ! All traces of these names have perished as to specimens of their actual play, except the names themselves—and those may never die while one spark of the living fire lingers in the breast of the enthusiast ;—but our loss is not the less to be deplored. True, in Salvio we read, in very general terms, that such and such a game happened to arise between such and such two celebrated players ; but upon closer examination we discover that this could only relate to particular “ coups,” or stratagems ; the whole of the moves played not being forthcoming. Indeed, it is but now that we begin to enjoy the fruits of any

* “ *DiSSERTAZIONE del Ch. Signore D. B. Rocco, sul Giuoco degli Scacchi, ristampata da Francesco Cancellieri Romano. Roma : Bourlie, 1817, 12mo. pp. 58.* ” A most interesting pamphlet.

thing like a systematic practice of noting down the games of acknowledged first-rates. Many of the leading artists in our own generation have never taken the trouble thus to retrace their victories; as Deschappelles, Sarratt, Boncourt, and a myriad of other Chess stars. Philidor played a match of ten games with Stamma, winning eight out of the ten, and drawing the ninth. Where are those studies now?

Reasoning upon the wholesome popular adage, when we cannot have what we want, we must be satisfied with what we have. One thousand games in a volume are at all events something, if only by way of instalment. To consolidate as far as possible the records of the past, upon which to build up the present, I have necessarily omitted a number of beautiful specimens I yet possess, woven by our present chess-chiefs; preferring first to give a perfect series of games, illustrative of "auld lang syne." And this motive has caused me sometimes to prefer adopting examples of comparatively inferior merit, to more modern compositions of excellence. Thus, the Fifty Automaton-Games might well have yielded place to certain stronger battles at the odds of Pawn and move, by our existing players; but then the tract in which those Fifty games originally came to life having grown scarce, and its reputation high, it became important to test its merits by comparison with the models of our own day. My "Chess Studies" being posited as the base of a collection, the pile may be completed by the student's subscribing for the future to the "Chess Players' Chronicle,"* "Bell's Life,"† and "Le Palamède."‡

In publishing a compilatory work, its very nature obviates the necessity of minutely characterizing the many authors and journals I have herein laid under contribution; and to which I thus publicly avow all obligation. From Bell's Life I have taken the games of merit there printed during the last ten years; and my friend St. Amant's Palamède has been in like manner largely borrowed from, as well as the Treatise of Von Bilguer and Der Lasa.§ By Bledow || and Janisch ¶ I am also favoured; and the whole of the late Mr. William Greenwood Walker's octavo volume**, now long since out of print, is incorporated in my three first chapters. I must sum up the confession of my very heavy "state of indebtedness," by acknow-

* "Chess Players' Chronicle." A magazine devoted exclusively to chess; published in shilling numbers monthly. London: Hastings, Carey Street.

† "Bell's Life in London." The popular weekly London newspaper.

‡ "Le Palamède." A chess magazine published in Paris monthly, in the French language.

§ "Handbuch des Schachspiels;" a new German Treatise by Paul Rudolph von Bilguer, and T. Von Heydebrand und Der Lasa. Berlin: Veit and Co. 1843, large 8vo. pp. 500. One of the best and most comprehensive works on chess ever published; in itself, indeed, a library. English translations of Der Lasa and Janisch are grand desiderata.

|| See Dr. Bledow's "brochure," in German; comprising games exclusively played by correspondence. Berlin: Veit and Co. 1843, pp. 102.

¶ "Analyse Nouvelle des Ouvertures du Jeu des Echecs;" par le Major C. F. de Janisch. St. Petersburg: Graff and Co. 1842-3; 2 vols. pp. 204. and 310. A highly valuable book; replete with interesting novelties.

** "A Selection of Games of Chess actually played in London, by the late Alexander M'Donnell, Esq., the best English Player, with his principal Contemporaries, &c. By William Greenwood Walker." London: Hurst, 1836, 8vo. pp. 280.

ledging the free use I have made of the Chess Players' Chronicle, from which I have taken the games played by Messrs. Staunton and Cochrane, and a host of other valuable parties.

My notes on the "Studies" throughout are not so numerous as might be wished; but I have found it impossible to extend them, consistently with the limits of a moderate sized volume. Mere book-making forming no part of my creed or practice, I simply present a register of the games themselves, and must refer the student, desirous of obtaining further details as to the various matches in which they were played, or the general relative merits and strength of the players individually, to other sources.

In travelling through these Studies, the reader must beware of classing players in his mind, merely according to the odds they appear to give or take; or the number of games they relatively win and lose. Philidor began by receiving the Rook from his instructor Legalle; and the veteran Alexandre once could allow the Queen to De la Bourdonnais. Among the many players claiming large odds of M'Donnell, will be found the respected names of some of our present first-rates. Nor can the standing of players be rated only in proportion as I have been fortunate enough to obtain written records of their skill, practically displayed. Some of the best modern chess-men never record a game they play, and thus rarely — too rarely — appear in this collection. Others, again, only "recollect" games they have won, and must not therefore be always assumed to have maintained the superiority apparently theirs, from their names mostly herein appearing as conquerors. To the majority of chess-amateurs it is, indeed, particularly "disgusting" to note down the moves of a lost game!

The tyro will perhaps think that the checkmate should always have been perfected in these studies, and may not therefore unnaturally feel surprised, and annoyed, at so many specimens being dismissed, with the mere declaration that such a party "wins" or "draws;" while "he is certain" the advantage is merely the gain of a Pawn, or an acquisition of "similar low value." I can only inform such critics, that games thus given up are so constituted in their relative final positions, that between even players of a high degree of force, they would be here at once abandoned; and were actually thrown up when stated, for the reasons assigned; the finish being purely mechanical, and mutually seen through by both parties. When games are dismissed as being by their nature drawn, and therefore useless to be carried further, the learner is advised to ascertain, precisely, WHY the contest is thus declared to present that most unprofitable conclusion—a draw,—whether the case be one of perpetual check, or what is the real reason which caused such decision to be come to. A few of our games were left unfinished by the players, but are preserved for some peculiar features of merit, and as being, therefore, almost equally valuable with their fellows. All games not ending with checkmate, present studies of especial interest to the comparatively inexperienced; as two novices can take up the different sides, and play them out. Checkmates are understood to be forced, when the number of moves is specified; and their solution is purposely withheld, to save space, and serve as instructive lessons. The advanced player will forgive observations not intended to be "thrust" upon his experience.

Passing from these introductory remarks to more particular details, I now proceed to review the contents of my Chess Studies, chapter by chapter;

briefly touching on their several more important features of interest, and on the relative qualities of a few of the great players whose wars are here recorded.

The First Chapter of Chess Studies includes the whole of the games played by De la Bourdonnais and M'Donnell, in the exact order they occurred. The master spirits of our age, it is fitting they should stand out foremost in the ranks; and I unhesitatingly pronounce this to be the finest series of games actually played, on record; the merit of the collection being considerably enhanced, from the fact of its comprising all the games these rivals for chess-fame ever played together; thus furnishing an average specimen of skill, the more conclusive, because not merely a selection of games picked out for their superior merit. The parties here given have already been printed more than once; and I dwell the less upon them, as having so recently gone at great length into the subject.* They will ever present a "*chef d'œuvre*" of the art, uniting every known quality composing the highest style of Chess-play.

In our Second Chapter, I give thirty-nine games played by De la Bourdonnais with various players, when at the top of his strength; being all of his which I find on record. Succeeding to the throne of his predecessor and master, Des Chapelles, De la Bourdonnais's proud title will ever live as King of Chess; the Napoleon of his time. Would that he had been longer spared to reign over us! De la Bourdonnais died in 1840, at the age of forty-three.

Chapter III. presents ninety-four games, all conducted by M'Donnell, the greatest Chess-player England has ever yet produced; snatched away from us by death, at the early age of thirty-seven; before he had attained that full "pride of pitch" to which his genius aspired to soar, and to which he would assuredly have mounted. In the games before us, M'Donnell mostly gives odds, such odds being nearly of every description; and on comparing this particular branch of his play with that of his competitor De la Bourdonnais, we pronounce with exultation, that our countryman was here the stronger of the two; though slightly inferior in general Chess tactics and acquirements. M'Donnell displayed the qualities of patience, endurance, research, and perseverance, in a larger degree; and, therefore, gave odds better than the more ardent and fiery De la Bourdonnais. It has frequently been pressed upon me to write a Chess Treatise, exclusively devoted to the development of the strongest methods of giving and receiving odds. We have here, in this very chapter, the most complete system of playing at odds possible to be devised. On the subject of defence, what can be wanting to the bulwarks of the strong players whose names we here find enrolled on the lists, as manning the castle walls; and as regards attack, where might we hope to project so perfect and splendid a code of desperate assault—so energetic a plan of siege and mine—as that which is here carried out by Alexander M'Donnell?

Passing on to Chapter IV., I have been enabled to offer no less than sixty-two games played by Philidor; the father and founder of modern Chess. To Philidor, we owe the first idea of registering games with a view to pub-

* See my paper entitled "The Battles of M'Donnell and De la Bourdonnais," in "Chess Players' Chronicle" for December, 1843.

lication—the first regular Treatise with copious notes for learners—and the first due appreciation of the value of the Pawns. His analysis of the mate of Rook and Bishop against Rook, is a masterpiece of skill, and difficult calculation; and unless the scientific discoveries of M. Zytogorsky upon the same subject* be invalidated, it follows that Philidor was correct in his discovery and assertion, that the superior force, in this statement of powers, can almost invariably win the game.

Chapter V. comprises games played exclusively by Philidor's contemporaries; and it becomes highly interesting to compare these specimens with those of our present first-rates, as to solving the problem of whether we have lost or gained in Chess science. We know that Count Bruhl and Dr. Bowdler were the first amateurs in England; and that Verdoni succeeded Philidor; holding the professor's chair, until it was subsequently occupied by his pupil, the scientific Sarratt. We also know that Philidor and Verdoni gave odds to every English player. I cannot, for my own part, believe we have retrograded; but altogether the contrary; thanks to Philidor himself, for the brilliant example he set the world in every way, as a Chess-master and Chess-scribe.

The Sixth Chapter of "Chess Studies" is composed of the fifty games played by Mouret; when conducting that neat piece of trickery, the Automaton Chess-player, in London. These games throw, undoubtedly, great light on the one particular opening their performer invariably adopted; but, in truth, Mouret ranked only himself as a second-rate player. Like a skilful charlatan, to make his clever piece of deception go down more glibly with the public, he persisted here in giving Pawn and move; but it must not be supposed that because he appears to win at these odds, of players like Mr. Brand, Mr. M****r, or Mr. Cochrane, he was in reality their superior in any one respect. As I have before said, it is difficult to recollect games we have lost; and we must not conclude that our "soi-disant" Automaton possessed a stronger memory in this respect than other people.

Our Seventh Chapter consists of games which have been played by correspondence; of which I have here got together nearly sixty. From the extreme degree of care taken on both sides, in the openings, and dread of risk, these games are, for the most part, heavy, not to say uninteresting. Exceptions of course exist. No. 363. is one of the most brilliant gems of Chess extant. The plan of attack was Mr. Cochrane's on the part of London; and he quitted England for India, with the assurance of a won game. His partners thought to "play fine" by sacrificing a Rook; and to Mr. Cochrane's horror, he subsequently learned they had justly lost the battle. The fifth party of the same match (No. 366.) is remarkably well-played by Edinburgh; who were mainly indebted for the winning of the laurel, to their champion Mr. D****ld**n, one of the most skilful Chess lovers in Europe. The play of the Clubs of Nottingham, Leeds, and Liverpool, in their various matches, is of a very high character; and cannot be re-

* In the "Chess Players' Chronicle," M. Zytogorsky has given a method of solving the well-known situation of this description of chess power, pronounced drawn by Lolli, as a game to be won by the superior force. M. Zytogorsky's method does not amount, however, to full and absolute proof; though it certainly appears to hold the seeds of truth. The subject is deserving of more copious analysis.